

BIBLE STORIES



FOR THE YOUNG

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MARY TEACHING JESUS THE ALPHABET

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BIBLE STORIES

FOR

YOUNG PEOPLE

ILLUSTRATED



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NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

1894

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The Sacrifice of Moab

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THE SACRIFICE OF NOAH



AFTER weeks spent on board ship, how delightful to step on land! To feel solid earth beneath your feet is a joy in itself.

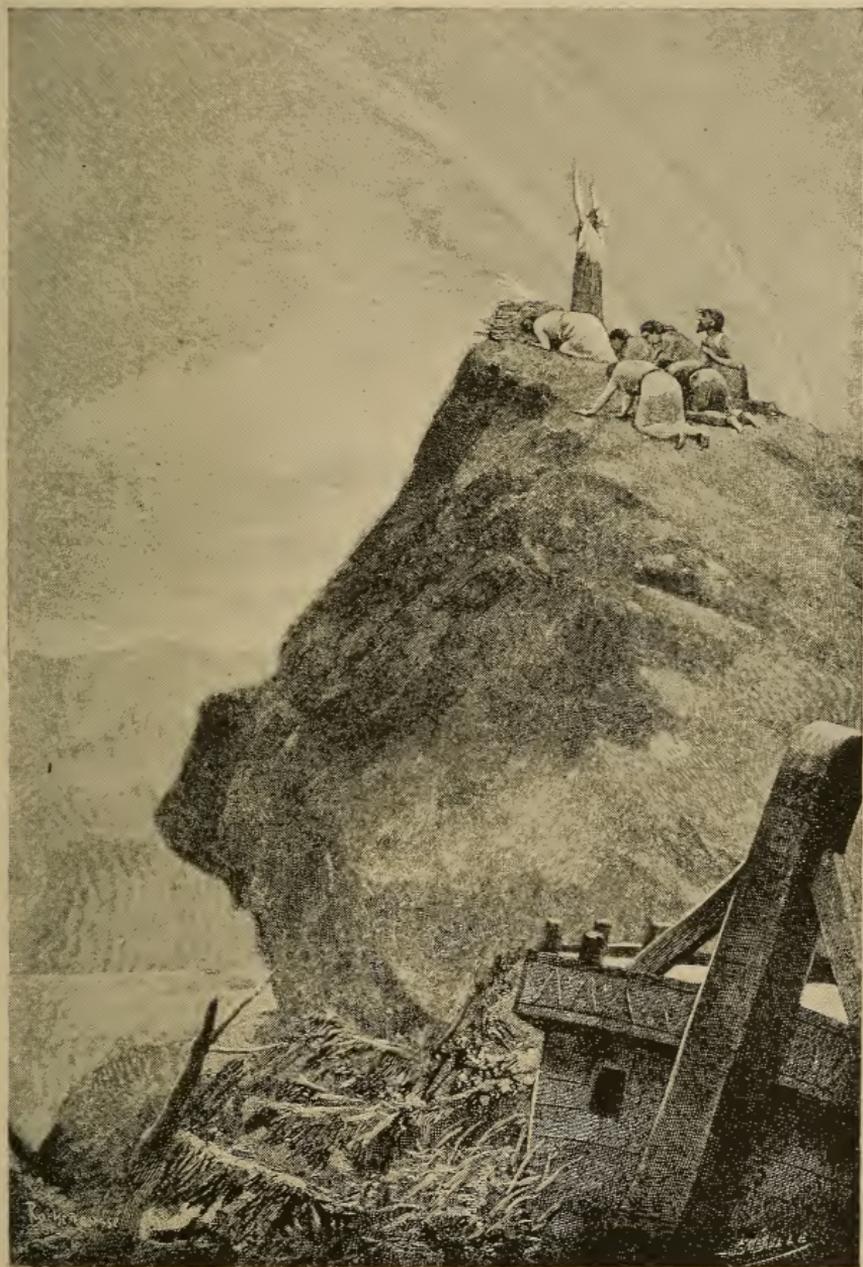
How different, too, are the smells. How pleasantly new are the sights. On every side, brain and nerves are alive to fresh sensations.

I remember how happy I felt after being twenty-nine days on the Pacific Ocean. The land I stepped upon was full of mountains. How grand, solid-looking, *fast*, they were. Nothing was rocking, swimming, tossing, or seesawing. Even at night I could undress and go to bed without holding on by one hand to the door-knob or clothes-hook. I suppose Americans call their ship bedchamber a "state-room" because they are in so uncertain a state while in them.

Not so very different was the ark from an Atlantic steamer, for both floated on the same unstable element. Noah looked as long and as eagerly for land as a sailor in the tops. When the pilot-raven was sent out and came not back, Noah took it as a good sign. Land was near, yet not near enough for the pink toes of a dainty dove. After the messenger dove's second flight, a letter came from God addressed to Noah. It was not written with pen, nor with ink on paper. It was an olive leaf, glossy green on one side, silvery gray on the other. Noah examined it as eagerly as we look for our friend's handwriting. Yes, it was a live leaf, not a dead one of last year before the flood. Fresh as a postage-stamp cancelled yesterday, it told the story of time. It was "pluckt off," the message read, in God's own words:

"Go forth out of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee."

How glad Father Noah and all the



THE SACRIFICE OF NOAH

young folks were to breathe God's air, which is usually so much purer than house or ship air. The great floating chest was like a cattle-ship, for it was full of livestock. After many months of wet and "nasty" weather—as sailors say—their cramped limbs enjoyed the climb up the hill-side. How sure and solid the ground felt to them. No wonder the Psalms are full of gratitude because God "setteth fast" the mountains.

First, they let free the beasts, birds, and creeping things out of their pens and stalls in the ark. What a scene of frisking, gambolling, and tail-whisking there must have been, as the animals regained their freedom, and scattered over the earth!

Fathers, mothers, and children, led by Noah, hastened at once to thank God. The way to do this in early ages was to build an altar of stones, and with fire and clean animals laid on it to send up a costly smoke to heaven. So worshipped all the ancient nations when the world was young.

High up on the mountain's crest,

whence they could look off on range upon range of hills and peaks, and upon the water in the valleys, they halted. Quickly they laid the stones in shape. Fire was very hard to get in those days; but besides plenty of drift-wood laying around the ark, they had dry pieces which they rubbed together. Soon a smoke, and then a spark, appeared. By blowing the spark, flame burst forth, and kindled the fuel.

Lonely places on the mountain-tops are very windy. The stiff breeze blew the loose hair of the men in front of their foreheads, turned the flame sideways, and swept the smoke towards the eastern sky. All in reverent expectation waited for some sign of the divine favor, while they watched anxiously the cloud-covered heavens.

Still dark and gloomy was the weather, still black the sky. Why does not God speak as in the olive leaf sent by the dove?

Suddenly the west wind rends the clouds, and the afternoon glory of the sun

burst forth. How green and tender seem the grass and flowers. Even the snow-tipped mountain-range in the far distance becomes rosy.

More glorious than all, see the rainbow—"a blazing band of dazzling dyes." All except the patriarch fall on their knees. They bow to the earth, while Noah lifts up hands and voice in prayer.

Pleased with his children's faith in Him, pleased with their gratitude, the Heavenly Father makes the bow the sign of his promise of continued favor and help. Soon a second bow of seven glorious colors—violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red—delights their eyes, and the clouds wear the double smile of God. To Noah and his children it meant that the flood should no more destroy man and beast from off the earth.

Even to-day there are those whose hearts "leap up, when they behold a rainbow in the sky;" for, as of old, it is a sure proof of the Heavenly Father's unceasing love and care.

An Ancient Courtship

of
Hathaway
brook.

AN ANCIENT COURTSHIP

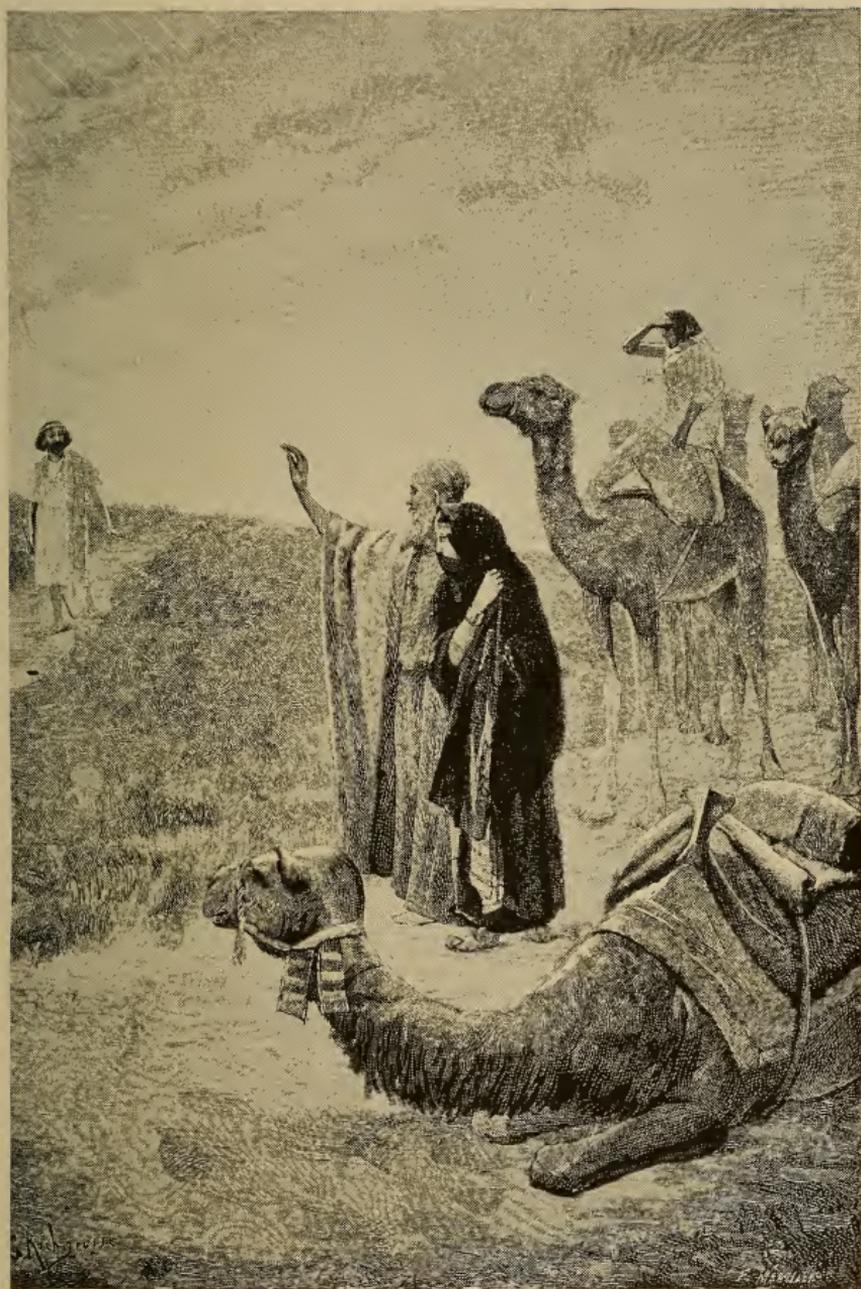


DO not believe there is a story-book printed which has in it more stories loved by children than the Bible. I once knew a little girl who divided all her time between the Book of Revelation and the *Arabian Nights*. Both were equally real to her, and in what a happy world of imagination did she live! She was just twelve years old, the age when boys and girls begin to read poetry and to dream of the wonderful. She is older and wiser now. She knows that the stories of the *Arabian Nights* are only stories, and that the strange things told in the Book of Revelation are not actually to happen, but like a cloak they hide the truth until the time of the prophecy's fulfilment. But the stories in the other books of the Bible are not like these of Revelation, for the other

books tell of real persons who lived long ago and of what they did. The Book of Genesis tells of the time the furthest back of all, yet the people it speaks of seem as lifelike and act as naturally as our next-door neighbors.

Now, you who are studying Greek or Roman history know what absurd tales the Greeks and Romans told of the founders of their nations and the first builders of their cities. They thought they proved themselves greater than the rest of mankind by making their forefathers appear more than human. The Greeks and Romans forgot that time would keep going on, and on, and on, and that other nations would come after them. For the result is that they provoke us who now live, and we say, "How can we tell anything of the beginnings of Greece and Rome, when all we have of their early days is a collection of silly stories?"

We have the same vexation with the older peoples who lived before the Greeks and Romans. When some wise man digs



MEETING OF ISAAC AND REBEKAH

out of the ground the stones, or the bricks, or whatever other material these nations wrote on (for they had not paper as we have), and translates the writing for us, we often have to rub our heads before we can make out what is meant. These nations seem to have loved to speak of themselves in such a high-flown, pompous way that we can hardly understand at times what they wrote, even when turned into English.

This is not so with the Jews. Their early history is clearly written, and they are the only ancient people of whom this can be said. If you will open your Bibles to the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, in which we are told of the meeting of Isaac and Rebekah, you will know what I mean by clear and simple writing. It is a beautiful story, and how sweetly told! I have always loved Isaac. He seems so gentle.

We never speak of Isaac without thinking of his father, Abraham, and his son, Jacob. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; how

easy it is for us to run off their names like one, two, three, yet what strange things happened to them. I think the most wonderful of all the events of their lives is that God added His own name to theirs, an honor He has never given to any other human beings. For He says of Himself, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

When Abraham left his father and his relations and went into the land of Canaan, as God told him to do, it was a time when many other men were leaving their old homes in Mesopotamia to go into new parts of the world, just as men went out in colonies to America when it was discovered. It was sixty-five years after he left Haran when he sent back for a wife for Isaac. This is the way to count it. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left his home, one hundred years when Isaac was born, and Isaac was forty when Rebekah came to him. How old forty seems to us! But forty could not have appeared more than twenty does

now when men lived one hundred and eighty years, as Isaac did. All that the Bible says of Abraham's relations in this long time is that Abraham knew his brother had children and grandchildren. But I believe the two families knew more than this of each other.

When Abraham dwelt in the plain of Mamre, where afterwards the city of Hebron was built, he was on the caravan road from Canaan into Mesopotamia, and Haran was a stopping-place for caravans going farther. We know this because Hebron still stands, and is still a starting-place for caravans. Haran has disappeared, but travellers think they have found the site of it on a small river flowing into the upper part of the Euphrates. That it was a centre of caravan trade we know from old writers. If this be so, the two families could send messages back and forth, and I think Rebekah knew more than we are told about Isaac when she said so readily, "I will go," and started right off.

To go back to the servant setting out with the camels loaded with presents in search of a wife for his master's son. He had no easy task, for besides picking out the right wife, a matter which greatly troubled him, as the story tells us, he had, what the story does not say, but what other travellers have found out for themselves, a hard and dangerous journey of between four and five hundred miles through a country probably as beset with robbers then as now. No one can go directly from Palestine to Mesopotamia, for a great desert lies between. Travelers in these days, like those in ancient times, have to go up to the mountains north of Palestine, then through them until they must turn towards Damascus, then again north from Damascus as far as possible, in order to cross as little of the desert as they can. A lady who once took part of this trip told me that it was the most dangerous and trying journey she ever had, and she rode a horse instead of a camel, which is far worse to ride.

When the servant drew near Haran, he stopped at the well, placed, as wells are now, just outside the town. Customs in the East do not change. A rich man to-day would send to his relations for a wife for his son in exactly the manner Abraham did, and the servant would stop where this man halted, for the well is the place to see all the people of a town, and to learn all the news. It is, at evening, to an Oriental village the same meeting-spot that the post-office at mail time is to small towns here. The women come for water with which to cook the supper, and the men bring their flocks to give them drink, before shutting them up for the night.

Now how would the servant set about his business in a country so different from ours? In this perplexity he prayed to God, and said: "Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water. And let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher,

I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she whom Thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac.”

While he was yet speaking these words in his heart, Rebekah appeared with her pitcher on her shoulder, and behold, all he had wished came to pass.

It may seem strange to you that Rebekah should have to draw water, but the daughters of rich men in the East do the same thing now; only, travellers tell me, that they never find any one so obliging, nowadays, as to water their camels. To be kind to strangers gives any one a high reputation in Oriental countries. So you see what the servant meant when he decided to make the courtesy of the young woman the test of the success of his errand. In his eyes such a girl would be a well-trained lady, and the quickness (for it says “she hastened” and “ran”) with which Rebekah set about her task filled his cup of satisfaction to overflowing, especially

when he was sure she was one of the family he was seeking. For a man to stand by while a woman does such hard work as filling the stone troughs around a well for animals to drink from is not according to our notions, but it is still right in Palestine. Ideas of a girl's accomplishments vary in different countries. I once asked a Japanese if young ladies in Japan were taught anything — meaning, did they go beyond what they learned as children. "Certainly," he said, a little indignantly; "every Japanese young lady is taught the arrangement of flowers and the etiquette of making tea." "What a different world from our own," was all I could think.

Abraham sent his servant this long journey because he wanted Isaac to have a wife who believed in the true God as he did. The people who were filling up the country where Abraham dwelt, and most of those who lived in Mesopotamia, worshipped idols. We see, further on, in Genesis, when Jacob and Laban separate, that Abraham's family worshipped God; but

they could not have cared so much for Him, or understood Him so perfectly as Abraham did, for, while he was willing to push forward wherever God led him, they were satisfied to stay behind.

The rich presents the servant brought were really the price he paid for Rebekah, for a bride in the East is bought from her family. When we read, though, that Rebekah's nurse and damsels (meaning her servants) were sent with her, we feel sure that the family gave her all that was suitable to a sister about to marry the son of a great man.

A hardy young woman like Rebekah perhaps did not mind travelling on a camel, but an American who once crossed a desert on one told me that a camel was a terrible beast to ride on. This was his experience. He did not have such a comfortable saddle as we see in the picture. His saddle was like a wooden saw-buck, placed so that the camel's hump, which is only a mass of fat, rose through the opening in the middle. To the four legs that

went downwards were attached the straps that bound the saddle on. In the centre, over the hump, should have been a padded cushion which should have stretched over the four legs that stood up, but there were only the tatters of a cushion, and pieces of old carpets, and whatever rags the Arabs could find, were put together to take its place. Across this improvised cushion was thrown a pair of big saddlebags which hung down on each side of the camel. These were stuffed full of all the odds and ends of the camp. He once looked into his, and found a lot of old tin pans. When he sat astride the camel, the stretch was dreadful, to say nothing of knocking against the tin pans. When he sat sideways he could not keep on. He could not keep his seat because of the peculiar jolt of a camel's gait. The camel moves the two legs on one side, then the two legs on the other, and as it has no spring in its motion, the traveller is jerked first to one side, then to the other, and his back and head keep up a continual wob-

ble, wobble, wobble. In despair, our American and his companions, for they all had the same bad saddles and dreadful saddlebags, and they all fell off when they did not want to, tried riding on the camels' necks. The camels did not mind a particle, but as their necks are sharp and thin, the result was only a change from one discomfort to another.

This same unlucky camel-rider told me that a camel's ordinary gait was three miles an hour, which is its natural walk; that it could go at a great speed, but only for a short time, as any gait faster than a walk tired it out very soon, nor could even the Arabs bear the jarring of a fast journey long. An Arab boasted to him that a camel could go sixty miles an hour. This he did not believe, but he did believe it could go a great many miles an hour, because, when running, its stride is enormous. A young camel never used for burdens, such as a sheik would ride, is as much better than an ordinary camel as a fine young horse is better than an old cart-

horse. Perhaps it was one of these young beasts that carried Rebekah. We have left her so long that she must be at the spot where she lifted up her eyes and saw Isaac walking in the fields thinking, and, most probably, watching for her arrival. Again she justified the servant's opinion that a courteous damsel would do everything right, for she alighted at once, as it was proper for her to do when Isaac was on foot, and covered herself with a long cloak-like veil, just as an Eastern bride would do now if she saw the bridegroom coming. Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel were all beautiful, and their husbands loved them, but Isaac and Rebekah are the only two of whom so long and pretty a story is told.

Esau Selling his Birthright

John P. Payne

ESAU SELLING HIS BIRTHRIGHT

VERY boy in the class holds up his hand and is ready to answer when the question is, "Who were the sons of Isaac and Rebekah?"

Esau and Jacob, of course. But can my young readers tell me why it is that all over the world, wherever Hebrew or Christian schools are found, there are a thousand little fellows who answer to the name of Jacob to one little fellow who answers "Present" when the name of Esau is called? Or did it ever occur to you to ask the reason why there are so many Patricks among Irishmen? I leave it with you to find out. Did you ever have a playmate called Nero or Herod? I venture to say you cannot remember one.

All I will tell you is that there is a

great deal in a name; that some names are odious and scandalous, "ill-seeming and bereft of beauty," and no boy would care to answer to them; for to be hailed as Cain, or addressed as Achan (who was a thief), would make a boy feel shame. Oh, there is a great deal in a name! Perhaps a rose called by any other name would not and could not smell as sweet. A rose has every inducement to live up to its sweet name, to be as good as its name. I should hate to see a man called Washington hanged for treason to his country. And if a man named Cæsar played the coward, it would shock our sense of fitness.

Now there are few Esaus to be found in the rolls of names, and I will tell you why. Because young Esau had the first claim on a great boon, on a glorious privilege, and basely surrendered it, and ignobly threw it away to gain a mess of pottage, a present gratification of the senses, for he sold his birthright for a plateful of food.

It was this way in olden times; it is this way now in Europe: that the eldest son of a king inherits his father's throne, or the eldest son of a nobleman his father's title and estates. It is called the right of primogeniture, or the right of the first-born to inherit. In our country we have no such law. Here younger sons are equal under law to the first-born, and sisters and sons share alike in his estate when the father dies. It is not so in all countries; it was not so in Bible lands. Esau, by virtue of being born a few minutes before his brother Jacob (they were twins, you know), was in the line of succession, was entitled to the covenant blessing, and on him rested the obligation of continuing the work begun by Abraham and Isaac. But Esau loved hunting and pleasures of the senses, and did not care for or concern himself about spiritual qualities, the covenant blessing, or the other world. Esau had no Abrahamic stuff in him. He had reverted to the heathen type, to Bedouin blood, and this world

was good enough for him. So he chased game, and companied with his heathen neighbors, and was the favorite of his father. For Isaac did love Esau, because he did eat of his venison. There are fathers yet to be met with who have a marked tenderness for the successful son, who, with a weakness for venison or courage or handsomeness, ignore a plodding Jacob in favor of a brilliant and dashing Esau.

But Rebekah loved Jacob, who was a plain man dwelling in tents, who cared for lentiles in the garden, the ailing lambs of the flock; a mother's pet, with domestic tastes; a timid nature, averse to rough sports and dangerous enterprises.

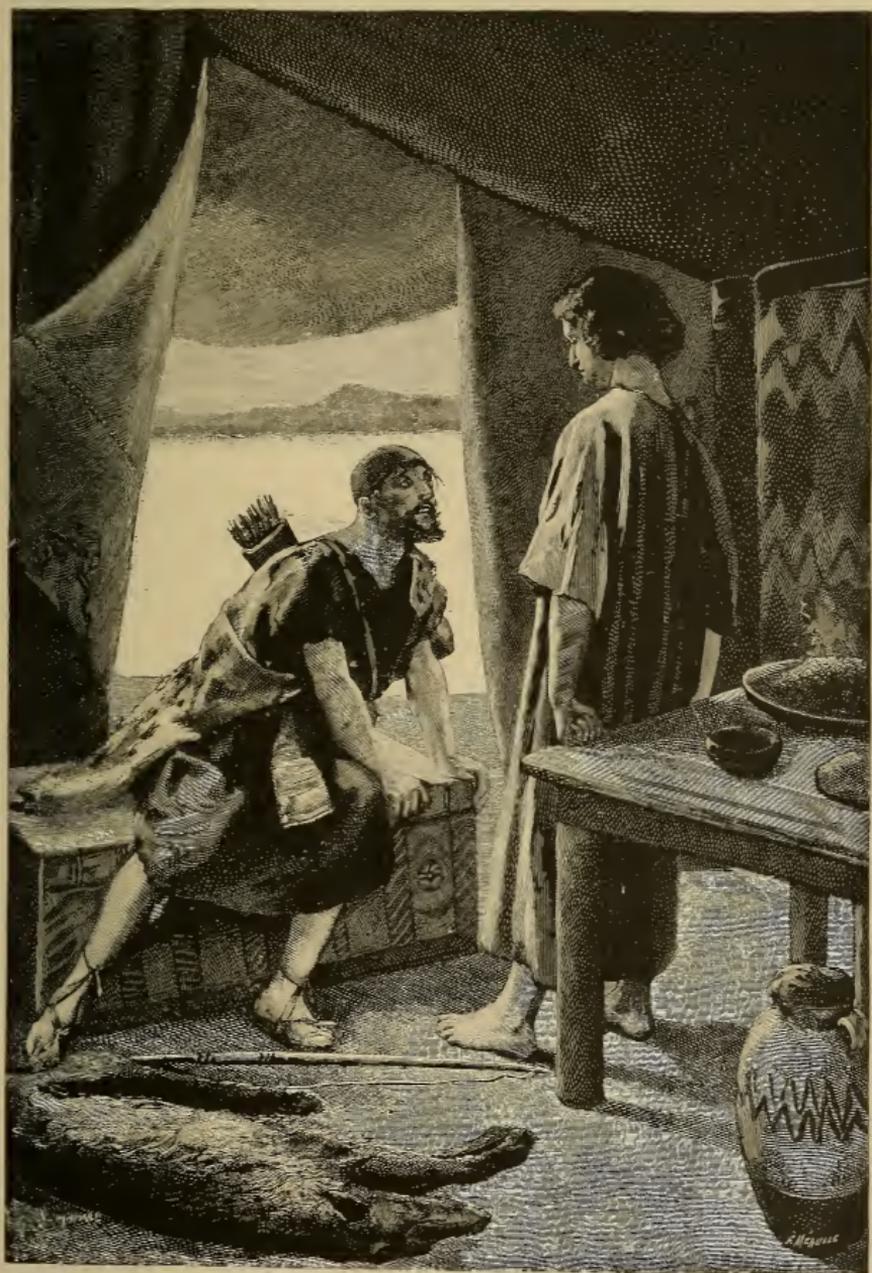
And this partiality in the family was the beginning of the sore troubles and unhappy strife that broke up this home, filled Esau's heart with rage against Jacob, and sent Jacob fleeing for his life from his father's house. A curse rests on partiality in the family. It is the cause of much alienation and domestic

discord and unnatural strife between brothers and sisters; it saddens and poisons many young hearts; it is the secret of much cynicism in men and women. They were sinned against in their youth, in their own homes, and by their own parents, for they were neglected and abused, while a brother was petted and dressed in a coat of many colors, emphasizing partiality. And these men never wholly recover from the pain and hardening effects of such partiality in the family. They mock at paternal devotion and sneer at filial love. Beware of partiality in the home circle, ye parents of our young people, for it saddened Isaac's old age, and made Jacob a fugitive from his brother's righteous wrath.

And it happened in this wise: that birthright blessing which belonged to Esau as the first-born he did not care a bit about, but young Jacob cared everything for it, and coveted it, and so did his mother, who aided and abetted him in securing it, for they made a little plan to-

gether to get it—first, by buying off Esau, by persuading him to relinquish a claim on something he did not value; and, second, by deceiving Isaac, old and blind, and who alone could bestow it. So one day when Esau returned from the chase, faint from fatigue and hunger, the wily young Jacob had a savory stew simmering over a fire. The nostrils of Esau informed his stomach that it was good, and the cry of the appetite was louder and stronger than the voice of the soul.

“And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me. . . . for I am faint. . . . And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?” And so it was done; Esau sold his birthright for Jacob’s pottage. “He did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.” And there are some things done once for all in this world. This was one of them, “For afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was reject-



ESAU SELLING HIS BIRTHRIGHT

ed: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

Now let me point the moral which adorns this tale.

A boy or a man who lives from his senses, who heeds the cries of passion, and disregards the calm voice of conscience and duty, is an Esau who sells his birth-right as a child of God, for God, when He created man, made an immortal soul, and built a body up around it—a casket to contain this precious jewel. Therefore in a boy or man the soul should always be on top, and should come first in choices we make and directions we take. The senses of this body of dust should be the soul's servants, not its masters, and its inclinations always be subordinate to the dictates of duty—another word for God—conscience, and soul.

But Esau preferred the gratification of his senses to the reward of spiritual well-being, and he was lost. He lived a life that came to nothing. As Dean Stanley says: "With all his good-nature, frank

manners, ready courage, he disappeared in the wilderness; he lived a wandering sheik of the desert; he left no mark in history;" he fought no battle for any good cause.

Poor Esau! He did not frankly abandon the flesh and take up with the spirit; he could not "scorn delights to live laborious days," and was *rejected*, as all such men are. For men of the spirit always, in the long-run, beat men of the flesh in making their way to fame, or fortune, or the Promised Land, or handing down a covenant blessing. Abraham prayed, as Matthew Arnold said, "that Ishmael might stand before the Lord"—that is, succeed him. But no. Not the brilliant and audacious Ishmael, but the homely and humble Isaac is the child of promise, continues the good work, and is the favorite of God; for Ishmael was a man of the senses, but Isaac a man of the soul.

So Isaac loved Esau, and would have preferred him; but God gave the blessing to Jacob, for, with all his faults, he was a

man of the soul. He preferred the blessing to pottage; he had a Godward slope to his mind; he was interested in moral questions, and back of his timidity, craft, and many weaknesses there were a resolute will, a steady purpose, and a fixed aim—the senses second to the soul. And he got it, and became one of the fathers of that chosen people out of whom have come the religion and morality of the world.

Then let all the young people who read these stories lay it to heart that men of spirit beat men of the senses; that to succeed in life, carve out a career, make a good finish, and get into any Promised Land requires more than good-nature, reckless courage, and brilliant parts. For solid faculties are better than erratic genius, and steady, plodding industry, backed on conscience, wins more than wit, charming manners, and jolly good-fellowship in any quest in life; for Esau—the man of impulses—is always beaten by the Jacobs of fixed aims and steady principles, who

subordinate a present good to a future reward. Then be no Esau, with the senses your master, but a young Jacob, with the soul on top. For Esau's path across the world is lost in briars and overgrown with weeds, and obliterated before he has passed early manhood. The world sees him no more, has no use for him, no need to see him. But Jacob still lives and influences human conduct. For he was the father of Joseph, and Joseph made Moses possible, and Moses still thunders from Sinai at successive generations of mankind, therefore Jacob is alive. His path across the world is not overgrown with briars and weeds and lost. Oh no; it is open and plain from Shechem to Egypt, from Egypt to Sinai, and from Sinai to the Promised Land beyond the river.

God forbid that any of my young readers should make Esau's choice for the senses above and before the soul! It does not *pay* for this world, for vice has more martyrs than virtue. Many people suffer more to be lost than they would

have to suffer to be saved. Wickedness is wretchedness in the end, and piety is peace and a sound mind in a sound body. And it does not pay in view of eternity, for the senses die when our bodies refuse to serve us longer, of course, but the soul must give account to God.

But I am too long. Never sell your birthright for any mess of pottage. Never be the degenerate and dishonest son of worthy and upright parents. Never blot a good family record—a black sheep in the household. Never throw the rein on the neck of the senses, but make the soul your master. Let duty, not inclination, control your conduct and govern your way. Bid the Esau of your senses pack and begone, and summon Jacob to the top and front of your life—the God-born man, who despised the pleasures of sin for a season, and had an eye to the issues of eternity, to spiritual qualities, to the recompense of reward. So doing, you shall share the Lord's paradise at last in the other world across the big divide.

And here on earth you shall be counted among those who continued the blessed work Abraham began—the glorious fight, young man, of the soul against the senses, of eternity against time, of heaven against earth. Begin it now, to-day, at once, to claim kinship with God, and clasp to your heart with hoops of steel that covenant blessing which certifies to us that we are children of God, heirs of an immortal life, and enlisted to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil in a life-long warfare under the banner of the Redeemer's Cross.

Jacob Before Pharaoh

Handwritten signature or scribble, possibly reading "Jacob" or "Pharaoh".

JACOB BEFORE PHARAOH

ISTORY abounds in magnificent royal scenes. In the parks and market-places and along the great streets of famous capitals there have been royal processions and pageants so grand that great historians have described them at length, poets have clothed them in verse, and painters have immortalized them on canvas. In one of the largest halls of the Louvre Gallery in Paris the paintings of Rubens depicting the career of Maria de Medicis of France are not only among the chief ornaments of the entire collection, but a notable triumph of modern art. But the reception of Jacob by Pharaoh in the great Egyptian court at Memphis is without a parallel in history. Pharaoh, the King, receiving Jacob, the aged and wearied pilgrim, seemed, no doubt, at

the moment to be a mere incident in the life of that splendid court, but in reality it was an occurrence which changed the entire life of humanity.

The events which led to that singular scene have all the charm of romance, and yet they are really historical facts. Joseph had been in Egypt seventeen years, and in that time had risen from a slave boy to be the Governor over all the land, and second only to the King. The brothers who had sold him made several visits from their home in southern Palestine to Egypt to buy corn because of the famine then prevailing. Joseph carefully concealed from them the fact that he was their brother until the third visit, and then he made himself known to them—that he was none other than the brother whom they had sold long years before. This was not only a great surprise to them, but to the whole court, and very probably to the people of Egypt in general.

In due time the news reached the ears

of Pharaoh himself. He was delighted to know that the brothers of Joseph had come to his capital; and then he gave a signal proof of his confidence in Joseph and love for him, by directing him to tell his brothers to return home and bring back their father and all the household, promising that they should have for their future home the best of the land. Then Joseph gave special orders that wagons and food in abundance should be given his brothers for transporting the whole family from Palestine to Egypt, while to his father he sent a special gift of corn and bread and meat—in fact, a large supply of the “good things of Egypt.”

When the sons of Jacob reached home and told their father the wonderful news that Joseph was alive, and that the family was invited to Egypt, he could not believe them at first. But when they related to him the exact words of Joseph, and, above all, when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him and his family to Egypt, he believed them. He was

overwhelmed with joy. "It is enough," he exclaimed. "Joseph, my son, is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

It often happens that good-fortune makes men blind to their former poor condition. They frequently imagine that they are the cause of their own prosperity, and have no reason to acknowledge their obligation to a merciful Providence. History abounds in proofs of the ease with which wonderful success makes people cease to practise the sterling virtues which had characterized the early period of their career. Alexander the Great was most exemplary and virtuous when a youth, and remained so until his brilliant achievements in India. Then he became intemperate, ceased to exercise any control over himself, and died in revelry. His great empire faded away like a mist in May. The young Napoleon of Marengo was a far purer character than when, later, he planned the Russian campaign, and expected to have all Europe at his feet.

The very first act of Jacob on leaving his old home in Hebron for his journey to Egypt proves that the wonderful news of Joseph being yet alive, and the invitation of the King of Egypt for him and the household to go to his country and settle down in the best of the land, did not elevate him a particle. He was just as humble as ever, and knew well that all this good-fortune had come to him through the divine mercy. Besides, he was not willing to keep this matter secret; he wanted to make it public. He therefore, after beginning the journey, took his family to Beersheba, where he offered sacrifices to God. His pause for worship proved him to be the true servant; otherwise he would have hurried off in great haste to accept the flattering offer of Pharaoh. The deliberation, the absence of all self-confidence, are beautiful examples of what the pure and noble character ought to be and to possess when sudden prosperity comes.

The richest country in Egypt was Go-

shen. It is that part of the land which lies between the eastern mouth of the Nile and the frontier of Palestine, and extends between the Mediterranean coast and the neighborhood of the Red Sea. Judah was sent on in advance to inform Joseph of the coming of Jacob and the family. Joseph let no time elapse before he made ready his chariot, and started off to greet his long-absent father. No happier meeting between father and son ever took place. Jacob was so overjoyed that he forgot all about Pharaoh's invitation, and wanted to die. The fact that Joseph was alive, and not that he was the Governor of all Egypt, was the occasion of his joy.

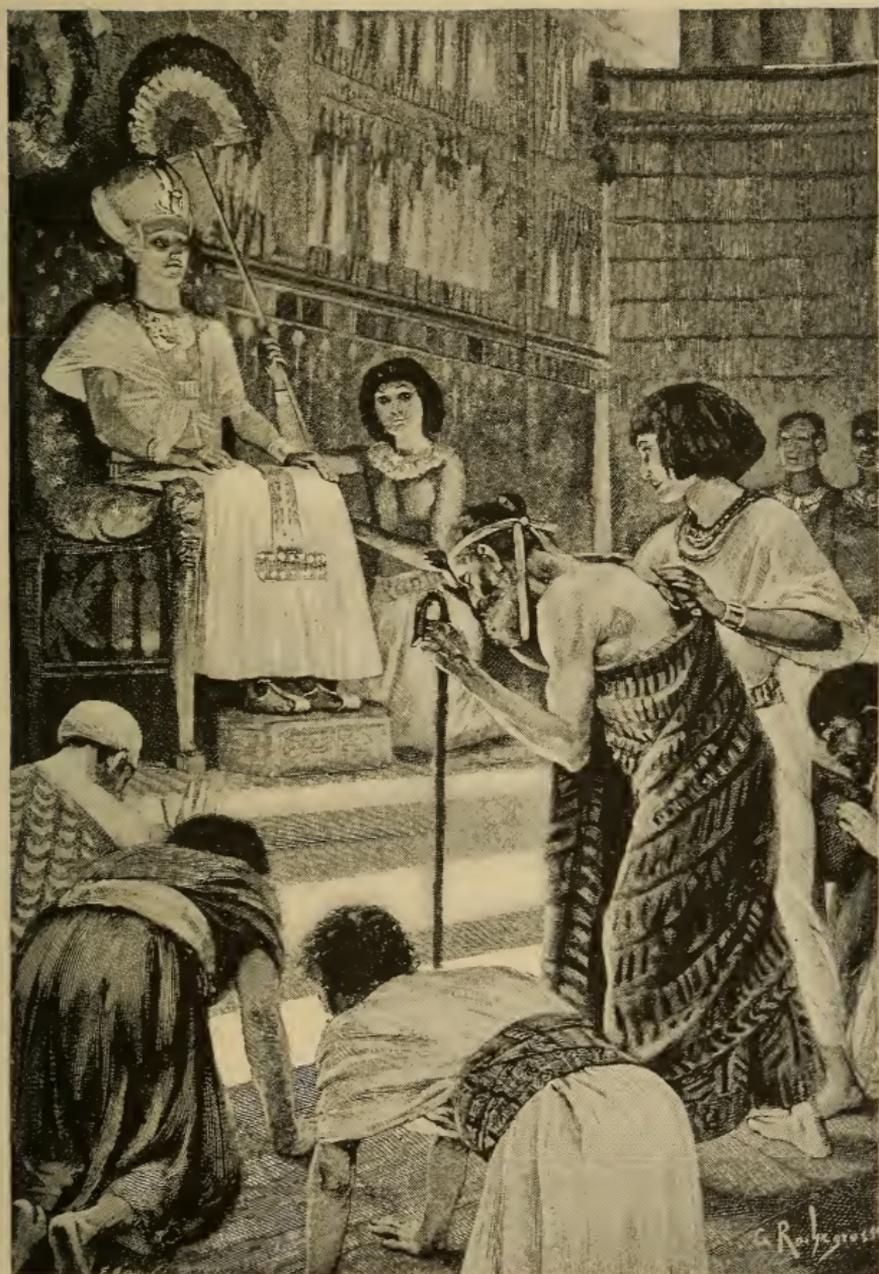
There was something very peculiar in the plan which Joseph adopted of introducing the family to the King. He did not take his father first into the King's presence, but five of his brethren. Pharaoh asked them what their occupation was, and when they told him that they were shepherds he assigned to them the

plentiful land of Goshen. He also gave special directions to Joseph as to placing the family in the "best of the land," and appointing proper members of the household as rulers over the King's cattle.

We now come to the culmination of this eventful history — Joseph leads his father into Pharaoh's presence. There certainly never was so singular an audience between a great King and an humble old man. No sooner was Jacob before Pharaoh than he pronounced a blessing upon him. Pharaoh was struck with Jacob's great age, and his question was, "How old art thou?" Every word which Jacob spoke was, like all the rest of his actions, plain, simple, humble. He said that his life was a pilgrimage; that it had lasted already one hundred and thirty years; that his days had been few and evil; and that he had but lived as long as his fathers. He then blessed Pharaoh again, and his affectionate son Joseph led him out of the King's audience-hall.

Let us now look beyond the dramatic incident of Pharaoh's reception of Jacob and his family, and his giving them a home in his country, and seek the cause which led to it, and the great and permanent result. Joseph had been a pure and noble man. No one ever passed successfully through more severe tests. He had been in prison, though unjustly, but was patient, devout, trustful. His good conduct opened the prison doors, brought him into Pharaoh's presence, and made him Governor over all the land. Had he been corrupt or once yielded to improper influences, he would never have been elevated to an important position.

Besides, whenever a man acts nobly he helps his whole family. Almost every day we read of some one, often a son, bringing shame and disgrace not only upon himself, but upon his family. We never stand alone. We never go down or go up without taking our friends with us. Joseph could not be elevated without taking all the rest of the family up the stepway with him. So when



JACOB BEFORE PHARAOH

the household of his father, seventy in number, came out of Palestine, and when the aged patriarch stood in Pharaoh's presence, and when the whole family settled down in the rich land of Goshen, the cause was as plain as noonday — Joseph had been above reproach, and the father was honored for his sake. One of the strongest impulses towards a spotless character and a blameless life should be, in every young person's mind, the certainty that such a life will bring honor upon every one in the whole family.

Jacob and his sons and all the family remained as a permanent part of the Egyptian population. More than that, they founded in their new home a separate people. Perhaps Joseph had a view to the necessity of keeping the family entirely apart from the Egyptians for all time to come when he told his brothers to tell to Pharaoh their real character — that they were shepherds. Now the Egyptians had once been conquered by a shepherd race, and they despised the

shepherd class ever afterwards. There was therefore no danger of the Egyptians ever intermarrying with the descendants of Jacob. The Israelites grew strong from century to century, developing with great rapidity, preserving their faith and ancestral memories and attachments, and never acquiring the least sympathy with the corrupt faith of the people among whom they lived.

Did the Israelites gain anything by remaining in Egypt? Would it not have been just as well if they had gone back to Palestine after the famine was over, or have developed into a nation there? Not at all. God had a purpose in their remaining in Egypt. They were to be a chosen people. They were to be the teacher of all nations. They were to be a nation which should possess the truth of God for universal distribution. They were to be the people out of whom should come the Messiah for the salvation of the world. Now for this purpose the Israelites were not only to be kept separate from all nations,

so as to preserve their own pure faith, but should learn lessons of perpetual value from the greatest, the most learned, the most advanced nation of the world.

This is just what Egypt was. The Egyptian civilization was far beyond that of any other people. The great Israelitish deliverer, Moses, was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." He was a direct descendant of Jacob, and at the same time he knew all that Egypt could give him. He was therefore able to lead, to teach, and to establish, as God's best instrument, the legislation for the Jewish people, and through them for the whole later world.

But it is the peculiarity of the good disciple that he can often improve upon the lessons of an earlier day. While the Israelites learned much in Egypt, they improved upon some of their lessons. For example, they learned in Egypt the art of writing, but only its very elements. The square letters of the Hebrew alphabet they acquired there, but these were little

more than hieroglyphic signs. But the Israelites developed them afterwards into an alphabet, and founded for all time the principle of regular writing, or the making a sign to represent a sound. But in the joint matter of religion and philosophy the people of Israel received their instruction only from the divine Teacher. When they had been long enough in the country to grow into a vast people, and had learned all that they needed for the fulfilment of their great mission as the world's teacher, the proposition for their deliverance was made by the oppressive ruler of Egypt himself. The Israelites were cruelly treated. They made ready for their departure, escaped from the despotic Pharaoh of the time, and started on their pilgrimage for the Land of Promise. In Egypt they reached the great result—one which we all need to reach—of never surrendering the good principles which we learn at home in early days, and at the same time of learning all the useful lessons we can from those with whom we associate.

Making Bricks in Egypt

By
Samuel H. ...
V. S.

MAKING BRICKS IN EGYPT



OUR young readers will naturally look at the picture, with its figures and forms of labor happily not now seen among us, but for all that full of sad suggestion. The men are carrying heavy burdens under the hot sun, whose heat is to dry and harden the bricks laid in order on the ground, and by-and-by to be carried and set in their places in the wall seen in the background. Two men are particularly to be noticed—one at the wall, and one at the end of the row of men laying the bricks on the ground. Each carries a long rod; one is holding it at his ease behind him, the other is about to lay it on the backs of the working slaves. These are the “taskmasters,” and their features are not the same with those of the toilers. Of these some are carrying the clay, some

digging it out, and some erecting the brick walls.

The usual way with the ancient Egyptians in some quarters was to dry the bricks in the sun, and even without straw they continue solid in walls erected four thousand years ago. On the other hand, where the bricks were made out of the Nile mud and similar material, they needed straw to prevent their cracking. Specimens of sun-dried bricks are to be seen in the British Museum, and many buildings, or the remains of them, still exist, such as, according to old historians like Herodotus, kings employed their poor enslaved captives in erecting. These points are mentioned here in connection with the picture, which is not merely for the eye, but is meant and adapted to suggest ideas to the mind, and to illustrate what is stated in plain language.

Now we beg our young friends to turn in their Bibles to the opening chapter of the book of Exodus, and to give a careful reading to the story up to the fifteenth

verse. They will remember that Joseph, having been raised to a place of great influence, encouraged his father and the great household of which he was one to come to Egypt; and, of course, as long as Joseph lived, and his great public service was gratefully remembered, they were treated with favor and enjoyed prosperity. It was a promise to their fathers that their offspring would increase and multiply, and in fulfilment of it the group of people that Pharaoh had welcomed—seventy in number (v. 5)—had now become so numerous that the monarch, who had nothing to do with or to recall Joseph's services (v. 8), and who ruled that part of Egypt (for all the land was not under one ruler), began to fear them. He dreaded what might happen. If a war broke out—and such events were common where rival races and leaders held portions of a great country—the Hebrews might side with the enemy, defeat him and his army, and so be free to “get them up out of the land.” Incidentally he here confirms

the consistent narrative of the Bible. The descendants of Jacob had been told all along, no doubt, of the promises made to their fathers of another land to be all their own; and when they began to be treated as serfs and slaves, they naturally thought, and no doubt spoke, of this their expected movement. He meant to repress them in numbers and in resources, and to keep them under control.

We who live in the United States speak freely of our liberties and advantages. So we well may, and the deepest gratitude ought to fill our hearts when we look at the bondage in which pride, ambition, and the love of continued power have too often held the feeble. We are to be careful as to the use we make of our advantages, to do all we can to extend such blessings, and to remember that if ever we be tempted to abuse our power, the just Ruler, who is stronger than all nations combined, will humble and punish us. The end does not justify the means. Pharaoh, as a ruler who had freed his

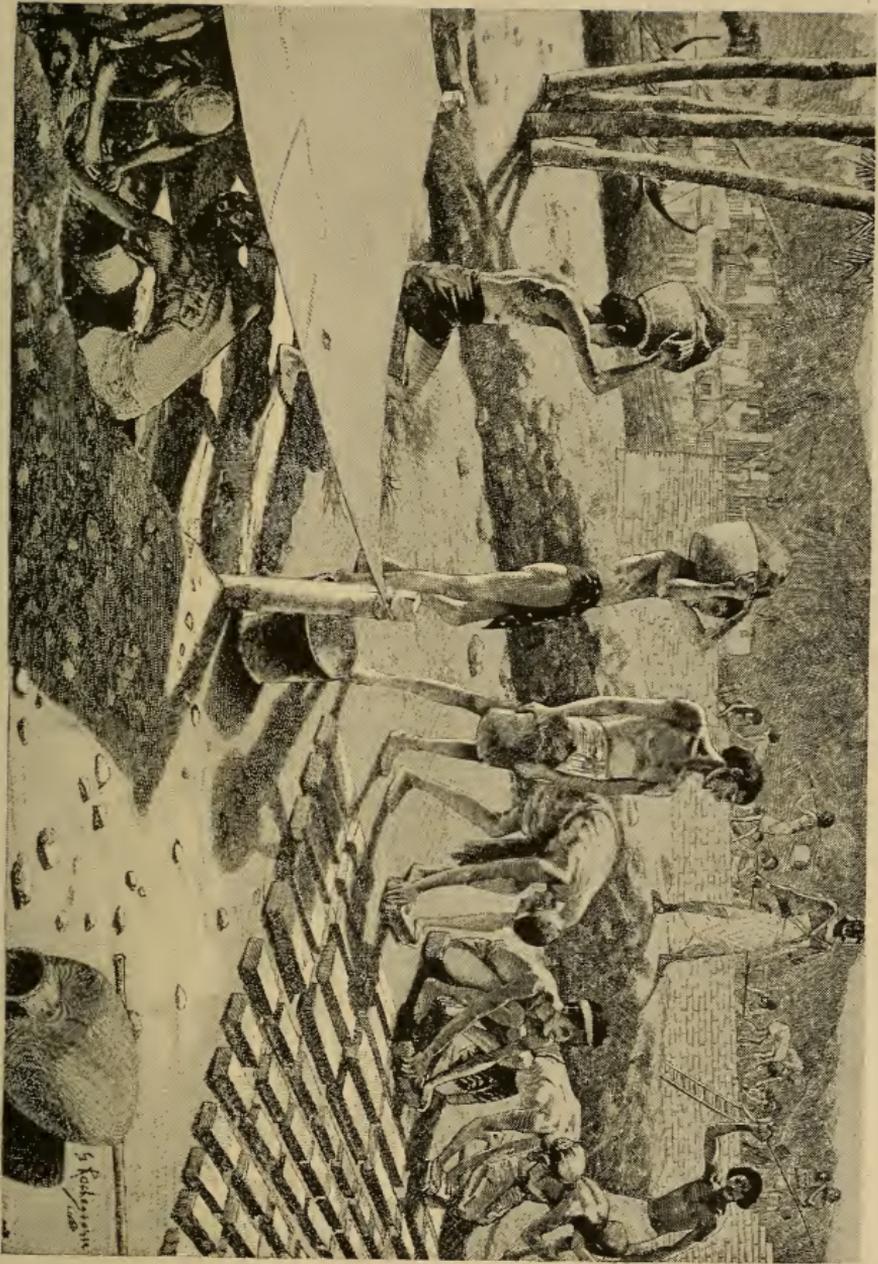
people from an alien neighboring power, meant well, but his cruel and oppressive policy in the end led to defeat and ruin in the waters of the Red Sea. Goshen was (Gen. xlvii. 6) and still is the most fertile tract in Egypt. It is now known as Es-Shurkiveh. The new King, first of a new dynasty possibly, did not wish to lose an industrious race of vassals, but he meant to keep them down and keep them under control. Hence the tasks imposed upon them, after the fashion of the time.

And here it may be mentioned that much study is now being given to Egypt by learned men. In fact, a science is growing up called Egyptology. The proofs of the truth of the Bible thus given are many and wonderful. An inscription, for example, believed by scholars to point to the twenty-second year of this Pharaoh, shows him rebuilding temples and storehouses, and employing foreigners for the doing of the work. Two cities particularly are mentioned in Scripture, the names of which stand on Egyp-

tian monuments. One of them, Pithom, means "temple of Tum," the sun god.

The sacred narrative is very emphatic as to the severity of the burdens laid on these Hebrews by the alarmed Egyptians, for the Hebrews continued to increase in number. The word "fellaḥ," a forced worker, is known to many. It comes from a word used by the Targumist Onkelos in describing the bondage under which the Hebrews groaned not only in the brick-making, but "in all manner of service in the field," which is thought to include digging of canals and processes of irrigation, a kind of labor very unhealthy. Pithom and Raamses were both on a canal, which was often being enlarged.

This oppressive policy went on till Moses and Aaron made the demand, of which we read in Exod. v. 1, for leave for the Hebrews to go and hold a feast to Jehovah in the wilderness. They specified a journey of three days into the desert. No doubt Pharaoh said in his mind:



ISRAELITES IN THE BRICKYARDS OF EGYPT

“Ah! just the thing I feared. They want to get away out of the land,” although this three days’ journey would not have implied crossing its borders. Accordingly he made the orders more rigorous. Straw was not to be given. The brick-makers must find it, and at the same time produce the same “tale of bricks” as before. There were two classes of officers over them, showing how well organized the system had become. There were, first, the taskmasters, apparently of two classes, one above the other, the latter called overseers; then there were “officers of the children of Israel” (v. 14), held responsible no doubt for “the tale of bricks.” In a papyrus of the nineteenth dynasty the writer complains, “I have no one to help me in making bricks, no straw.” The poor Hebrews had to roam over the land to get stubble. Here the scholars have made out two things which it is enough to state as results without trying our young readers with the process. The first is that this work would

be done after the harvest, the Egyptians then as now cutting off the ears, not the stalks of the grain. The second is that this period of the year, running over fifty days, is often most unhealthy, a pestilential sand wind blowing over the land. We can fancy their sufferings.

Still the orders were for the full "tale" as when they had straw, but filled up they could not be. What then? The overseer, according to a representation of the whole plan found in a temple at Thebes, is armed with a heavy lash, and cries out, "Work without fainting." The lash was laid on the Hebrew officers, who remonstrated and (v. 14) appealed to Pharaoh in vain. The order was renewed, the straw was still withheld, and the charge was made that their plea about sacrificing to Jehovah was only a pretence, "Ye are idle, ye are idle" (v. 17). So Egypt became emphatically the "land of bondage" to Israel, and—showing how hard it is to interfere between the oppressed and the oppressor—the Hebrew officers say to

Moses and Aaron in effect: "Why, look at what you have done! The Lord look upon you and judge. Instead of getting us relief, you have made our case worse than ever." It is a curious illustration of the simple truthfulness of the Bible story that it has the language which we now know from other quarters was common at the time. For instance, an Egyptian of rank who had a secretary to write his history thus berates the unhappy scribe: "Thou hast made my name offensive, stinking, to all men." Read Exodus, v. 21, and you will see the point.

We have now seen the condition of the toiling Hebrews in the years before they were set free. One or two things naturally suggested may be briefly indicated:

1. The Hebrews learned something that was of use to them no doubt when they had to settle in Palestine. In the time of David they had brickkilns (2 Sam. xii. 31), and they forced on the Ammonites the very labors through

which their fathers had gone, let us hope with less severity.

2. God brings good out of evil. Goshen was the most inviting and fertile part of Egypt, so if all had gone smoothly with the Hebrews they would not have wished to carry out God's plan. Of this there is evidence enough. This Egyptian cruelty alienated them from the Egyptians, and made them willing to go.

3. Few things of the kind are more remarkable than the confirmation of Bible history given by the researches of our own time in the lands of the Old Testament. Egypt, Assyria, and other lands are being explored, their monuments are being studied, their inscriptions are being translated, their manners and usages are being depicted, and the more we have of the results the clearer does it appear that the Scriptures are true to the truth of things in matters little and great as things existed when they were written. The outside evidence of the historic exactness of the books of Genesis and Exodus, for ex-

ample, is vastly fuller and clearer to-day than when the New Testament was written. With many temptations to unbelief around us, we should be thankful for this aid to faith.

Little Samuel

By Ann M.
Taylor

LITTLE SAMUEL

WHEN I was a little boy of about six years old I was accustomed to be taken to church regularly by my parents on the first day of the week. I cannot say that I definitely remember any direct instruction received at this date from the pulpit. I learned, no doubt, to sit quietly, so as not to disturb other people, and grew into habits of attention. But one memory stands vividly out before me still. My mother had a Bible, which I have now in my hand, not like other Bibles of the period, but one which she had taken out in numbers, and had bound for church use. It was about five inches long by three broad and two thick, with gilt edges, and finished with a flap, on the inner side of which was her name in gold letters; but what charmed me most was the fact that

it had six engravings of Bible scenes, which I never wearied looking at, and the study of which did more for me, I verily believe, than any sermons heard by me at that time.

The first of these pictures was a woodcut from Sir Joshua Reynolds's painting of "Little Samuel," representing a little boy in his night-dress, apparently just risen from his first sleep, and kneeling on the floor with hands uplifted and an eager look upon his countenance, while beneath were the words, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth." There was for me a fascination in this simple picture which held me like a spell, and I have never seen it since without emotion. It brings before me the whole story of Samuel, and as I look at it now I am a child again, sitting by my mother's side in the old pew.

One immediate result of all this was to make me very eager to read the history of Samuel, that I might know all about him; so I became familiar with the details of his story—how his birth was in



SAMUEL AND ELI

answer to his mother's prayer; how, out of gratitude to God, she consecrated him from his infancy to the Tabernacle service; how he grew up there into the favor of the aged Eli; how his mother came every year to see him, bringing him a new coat; and how, on the occasion to which the picture refers, the Lord called him, and gave him a message full of terrible forecast to the venerable High Priest. But that which interested me most was the statement that "Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child girded with a linen ephod"; and as I go back upon that now, I think it may fitly suggest the topic of early religion.

For one thing, it tells us that it is possible for a child to serve the Lord. It is not uncommon for young people to put off the matter of religion until they have grown older; but over and above the danger thereby incurred, there is no need for such delay. True, we cannot expect that piety will show itself in a child in the same way as it does in those who are

grown up, but it may show itself just as really, for all that; and wherever there is the spirit of trust in God, the willingness to learn out of His Word, and the determination to obey Him in everything, there true piety is. No matter, therefore, how young we are, we can still, like Samuel, "minister before the Lord."

And then the case of Samuel proves that there is no necessary connection between early piety and early death. It has somehow come to be believed that these two things are inseparable. The very good children are said to be too good for this world, and children themselves dislike the idea of early piety because of their love of life. We have all heard of the little boy who, on recovery from a dangerous illness, said, "If I had been one of them pious, I'd have been a goner, sure!" But Samuel lived to be an old man and full of years. Nor was he an exception in this particular. The same thing is seen in the histories of Joseph and Moses and Daniel, and, in modern

days, some of the ripest old saints who have lived to fourscore years and more feared the Lord from their youth.

Neither, again, does early piety prevent one from becoming distinguished in after-life. Samuel became Judge of Israel, which was, for the time, something similar to President among ourselves. Daniel was Prime-minister at the court of Babylon. Joseph rose to the second place in Egypt, and in general it holds good that godliness has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come.

Once more, Samuel was not a namby-pamby boy. He was, as we think of him and his life at the Tabernacle, a manly little fellow. He did not whimper continually after his mother, but was always glad to see her when she came with the new coat; and when he had to give that awful message to Eli, he did not quiver in the least, but gave it faithfully, though sadly. He was no milksop, nor tied to his mother's apron-strings. It is untrue

to say that religion in young or old is a mark of either physical or mental weakness, and those who would make us believe that such is the case are false witnesses and children of the wicked one.

Then, last of all, Samuel's life was a useful life. It filled a large place in the history of his people, and his influence was always for good. Wherever he went he was ministering before the Lord, just as he did when he was a little boy. Through life he was loved and honored by all, and when he died he was laid in the grave amid the lamentations of the people. Is there not something in a life like this attractive to us all, and will not every one of my readers make the prayer of the Christian poet his own?—

“Oh, give me Samuel's heart—
A lowly heart, that waits
Where in Thy house Thou art,
Or watches at Thy gates—
By day and night, a heart that still
Moves at the breathing of Thy will.”

David and Jonathan

[Faint handwritten signature or text, possibly "Jonathan"]

DAVID AND JONATHAN

HE modern traveller in Palestine will find, about three miles south of Hebron, a rounded hill or height of some hundred feet, which the Arabs call *Tell Zif*. It is some three miles northward from Carmel, and half a mile east of it are some ruins, which are those probably of a citadel used by the tribe (the Ziphites) from which the hill takes its name. There are indications that once the place was heavily wooded, and the lay of the land shows that before the forest was burned or cut away it must have been a tolerably secure fastness or retreat.

There were two young men to whom, in an eventful crisis of their lives, it proved to be so. One of them was that youth, a little while before a shepherd boy, than whose history there is nothing more pict-

uresque or romantic in ancient or modern times. A lad in his father's house, he goes one day to bring provisions to his brethren who were serving in King Saul's army. There was no commissariat, as we know the word, in those days. King Saul and his Captain of the host, Abner, would never have dreamed of the huge supply trains which nowadays accompany an army. The soldiers were left largely to shift for themselves, and if they had friends within reach, these were expected to feed them—if they could. And so David goes to the Valley of Elah, where King Saul was encamped with his army. The shepherd-boy has with him an "ephah of parched corn" and ten loaves, and with these he went to find his brethren. The battle had been set in array, and the Israelites waited for a champion who would face the Philistine giant.

They found him, but not where they looked for him, and David found that which, unlike a great many people, he had the vision to see and the courage to

seize—his opportunity. I may not tell his eventful story here, but there is one feature of it which any one of us who wants to do any worthy work in the world, whether for God or man, may well remember. I suppose that it was not only because the situation was so desperate, but because King Saul saw in David something that somehow made him believe in him, that led the King to say to David, "Go." But evidently he did not believe in him enough to be willing that he should go as he was. And so he harnessed him with a coat of mail, which David had no sooner tried on than he promptly and most sensibly took off.

That is the difference between David and a great many people to-day. The world is full of men and women who are thinking what a grand fight they could make if they had somebody else's sword and helmet and coat of mail. A boy looks at a box of tools, and then at a finished piece of work, and says, "Oh yes, I could make that if I had such tools to

make it with." David knew better than that. He had no use for any tool that he had not learned to handle, and on the other hand (and that I think was the finest feature of the whole business), he knew how, when the opportunity came for it, to do the largest piece of work with the very simplest possible tool. Such knowledge may almost be said to be the whole secret of any really great achievement of life. To know how, when the call for a great deed comes, to find *in yourself*, under God, the resources to meet it, and to put those resources to the best possible use; that is pretty much the whole of it. If I were a boy and were choosing a coat of arms to be engraved on a seal, I think I should take David's sling and five stones, for that is just what they mean.

And thus the lad took his first step on that steadily ascending pathway that led him "no step backward" to the high places of the world. Soldier, ruler, king, poet, singer, who has voiced the deepest cry of the human heart for all ages and

races and ranks of men — it all began, that bright, splendid, and though, alas! not unstained, yet eternally instructive, even as it is infinitely pathetic, career, with that first choice of weapons.

But long before that splendid career had approached its zenith there happened the meeting of David and Jonathan in the wood of Ziph.

And that brings me to Jonathan — a character so noble and beautiful that one has rarely been found to match it. Jonathan was the eldest son of King Saul, and a man of magnificent powers as a fighter. The story of the garrison at Michmash is a specimen of what he could do, and it is a story well worth reading. I may not tell it here, but this is the end of it: "And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were a half-acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough" (1 Samuel, xiv. 14). Two against twenty at least, and twenty dead on the field. "It was like

butchers' work," we say. Yes, but those were days when men knew no better, and with Jonathan and his countrymen it was a matter of self-preservation.

But the greatest charm in Jonathan was not his courage nor his skill as a soldier, splendid as these were, but his matchless loyalty as a friend.

The time soon came when King Saul grew jealous of the youthful David, and not only drove him from his presence, but hunted him for his life. The rare gifts of David as a soldier, a leader, and a man had drawn to him the hearts of all the people, and the nation demanded him as its king. But if he was to be king, then Jonathan was shut out from the throne. No matter, said Jonathan, "thou *shalt* be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee" (1 Samuel, xxiii. 17).

And so we come to the story of the meeting at Ziph, and of that wonderful friendship which explains it. It is the first instance of such a friendship between young men, romantic, unchanging, and tenderly



DAVID AND JONATHAN

devoted, of which we have any account in the pages of Hebrew history. Such friendships were not unknown in other histories. The story of Damon and Pythias, with its record of the heroic devotion of Damon, who, when Pythias, condemned to death, asks leave to return home and arrange his affairs, takes his place, expressing his readiness to die for his friend if Pythias should not return, is matched by other heroisms of friendship in other classic pages than those of Greece. But none of them is more beautiful in its mutual loyalty and love than the story of David and Jonathan. Three times they met to pledge to one another an undying friendship, and three times circumstances which they could not resist nor control tore them apart. But their hearts were one until the end; and when it came, the cry that the death of Jonathan wrung from the lips of David was one so poignant, so passionate, and so pathetic that to-day one cannot read it without tears.

The first of the three meetings was in

the camp of King Saul, by the Valley of Elah, when David returned with the head of the Philistine, Goliath of Gath. Beside his father when the King challenged the stripling David with the question, "Whose son art thou, thou young man?" stood Jonathan, the heir to the throne. It reveals a very beautiful and very noble nature that at that moment there woke in his heart no other feeling than that of keen and enthusiastic admiration and affection. And David answered the King, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." That was all that he said. But the way he said it, the simple, manly modesty of this young hero for God and his country, conquered the heart of Jonathan as in a moment. "And when David had made an end of speaking unto Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." And then followed the first sealing of the friendship, after the fashion of those days, by the pledges which Jonathan gave David to bind it—

his royal mantle, his sword, his girdle, and his famous bow. It was as though he had said: "You are worthier to wear these tokens of a king's son than I. Take them, and never forget that the two who first and last have possessed them are brothers."

It was not always easy to keep that sacred bond in mind. David, hunted by his friend's father, was tempted more than once to forget what was due to his king, even when the King was crazed and maddened by jealousy. And Jonathan must have often seen that if he could forget what he owed to his vow of friendship to David, it would be easy, by betraying him into the hands of his father, for a time at any rate, to bring again peace to Israel and honor to himself. But neither of them was shaken from his steadfastness. The time came when David, a fugitive from the face of Saul, was hiding by the stone of Ezel. Crouched under the huge rock, the solitary thing in the vast plain, he waited for the signal agreed upon

between Jonathan and himself. Presently it came in the arrows shot one after another beyond his hiding-place, and he knew that the King, more angry than ever, had determined that he should die. Nothing remained but to fly for his life. But before he does so, he comes out of his hiding-place into the open, prostrates himself three times before his friend, and then "they kissed one another, and wept with one another."

The last meeting was far away in the forest of Ziph. The illustration, with its careful adherence to the scenery and costumes of the time, tells us how it may have been. David had become the commander of an army—small indeed, but determined. Pursued by King Saul and his troops, he has intrenched himself and his followers in the strongholds of the wood, high up on a hill whose summit, clothed with thick foliage, at once screened him from observation and gave him easy command of the surrounding country. Hither it is that Jonathan follows him, and pledges

himself to him once more in words of undying constancy. They were words that David sorely needed to hear, for the army of the King had already wellnigh surrounded him, and he seemed caught as in a trap. It is at such a moment that Jonathan fearlessly seeks him in the forest of Ziph, and reassures him as to the future. His father, he bids David believe, would not overtake him. "Fear not: *thou* shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth" (1 Samuel, xxiii. 17).

The first part of that prophecy was soon to find fulfilment. But not so the rest. In a little while Jonathan fell, splendidly fighting, at Gilboa, and David sang that elegy which will live in the hearts of men as long as they can own and honor loyal and unselfish friendship. And to-day, as the feet of the modern traveller stand where once stood the woods of Ziph, two names will spring unbidden to his lips—the names of young men mem-

orable for courage and patriotism, but, most of all, dear and beautiful for their heroic and unswerving constancy to one another.

Esther and Elhasuerus

By
Robert C.
MacArthur
1881

ESTHER AND AHASUERUS

THE story of Esther, as given in the biblical book which bears her name, is interesting to young and old alike. Its literature fills no small place in various languages and in widely separated centuries. It is impossible to read the story without being to a greater or less degree under its spell. The name of Esther, the heroine of the story, has become immortal, and whatever is connected therewith shares to some degree in the interest and fame attaching to herself.

After Ahasuerus was settled in peaceable possession of the whole Persian Empire, he appointed a time of great rejoicing because of his prosperity. In the city of Shushan feastings were to continue for one hundred and eighty days. At the expiration of this time a still great-

er feast was held for seven days, and Vashti, the Queen, made a similar feast in the apartment for the women. On the last day of this great feast, the King, being merry with wine, commanded the seven Chamberlains to bring Vashti into his presence wearing the royal crown and otherwise displaying her great beauty. With a modesty which is as becoming as it was surprising she positively refused to comply with his improper request, although she knew that her refusal would cost her her crown, and perhaps her life. All honor to the noble resolution of this brave woman in that far-off time and land! After taking the advice of his seven counsellors, the King determined to put her away forever, lest her example should lead the women throughout the empire to disobey their husbands. Vashti never afterwards came into the King's presence. The decree which removed her was registered among the unchangeable laws of the Medes and Persians. Orders were then given that the whole

empire should be searched, and all the fairest virgins should be brought to the palace at Shushan, that from the number one should be chosen to be queen in the place of Vashti. There lived then at Shushan a Jew named Mordecai, who had an office in the court of the Persian monarch. Having no children of his own, he brought up Hadassah—in Hebrew, *myrtle*—his cousin, whose parents were dead, as his own daughter. She was the daughter of Abihail, of the tribe of Benjamin, and was born during the exile beyond the Tigris, probably about the year 500 B.C. She was beautiful beyond comparison. When committed to the care of Hege, the King's chamberlain, she greatly pleased him, and he took special pains that she should be the object of the royal favor. She gained the affections of the King beyond all others, and on the tenth day of the tenth month the royal diadem was put upon her head, and she was made queen in the place of Vashti.

According to Oriental usage, when introduced into the royal household she received the new and probably Persian name of Esther, and by it she was henceforth to be known. This name is derived from the name of the star Venus, which in Greek is Aster. It was, perhaps, connected with the Persian word *satarah*, a star. Her ancestor Kish was among the captives led away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The family evidently remained after the edict of Cyrus gave permission to return to Palestine. The Persian King does not seem to have been aware of her race. At this time Haman the Agagite was prime-minister; he was probably a descendant of that Agag, King of the Amalekites, whom Saul spared; he was now a favorite in the household of the King. All the King's servants were commanded to pay him reverence, and all of them rendered that reverence with the exception of Mordecai the Jew. He was willing to render him civil obeisance—this he could

do under the Jewish law—but divine adoration he could not give him; and this the Persian kings in some sense expected; but this in no sense, as a true Jew, could Mordecai render. Haman therefore resolved to seek revenge for this affront by destroying the entire race.

He represented them to the King as being a pernicious people, and he secured full power to kill them all, young and old, women and children, and to take possession of their property in the name of his government. There may have been a lingering hatred towards the Jews because of the ancient enmity between them and the people from whom he descended. It is altogether probable that Esther herself, though queen, was included in this terrible decree. The laws of the empire were such that the decree once issued should not be recalled. Eleven months, however, were given after the issuance of the decree before its execution. By his superstition in the casting of lots Haman chose this time, but God's providence was

seen in allowing time for Esther and Mordecai to lay plans for the protection of their people. Soon Mordecai heard of this decree. There was great lamentation on the part of all the Jews in Shushan and throughout the land. Putting on sackcloth, Mordecai sat without the King's gate. This circumstance was reported to Esther. Soon Mordecai was able to inform her of the whole state of the case. He sent her a copy of the decree, that she might see that the intention was to destroy her people from off the face of the earth, and he urged her to go unto the King and make supplication on their behalf. At the first she excused herself, knowing well that whoever came unto the King in the inner court, who was not summoned by him, should be put to death, except the King might possibly hold out the golden sceptre. She feared to hazard her life even in this noble cause; but Mordecai assured her that her life would be forfeited with the lives of her people if the decree was executed.

She therefore resolved to hazard her life for the safety of her people.

On the third day she put on her royal apparel, and stood in the presence of the King while he was seated upon his throne in the inner palace. This was an act of heroic self-sacrifice. The King upon seeing her held out the golden sceptre. Esther went near, touched the top of it, and thereby her life was preserved. In response to his request as to what her petition was, she simply desired that Haman with the King should come to a banquet which she had prepared. At this banquet he again asked her of her petition, and her only reply was that they should come again the next day to a like banquet. She thus desired to endear herself unto the King more fully before she preferred her great request.

Haman was greatly elated by the honor thus conferred upon him; but on returning to his home thus puffed up, he saw Mordecai once more sitting at the gate of the palace, and still refusing to do him

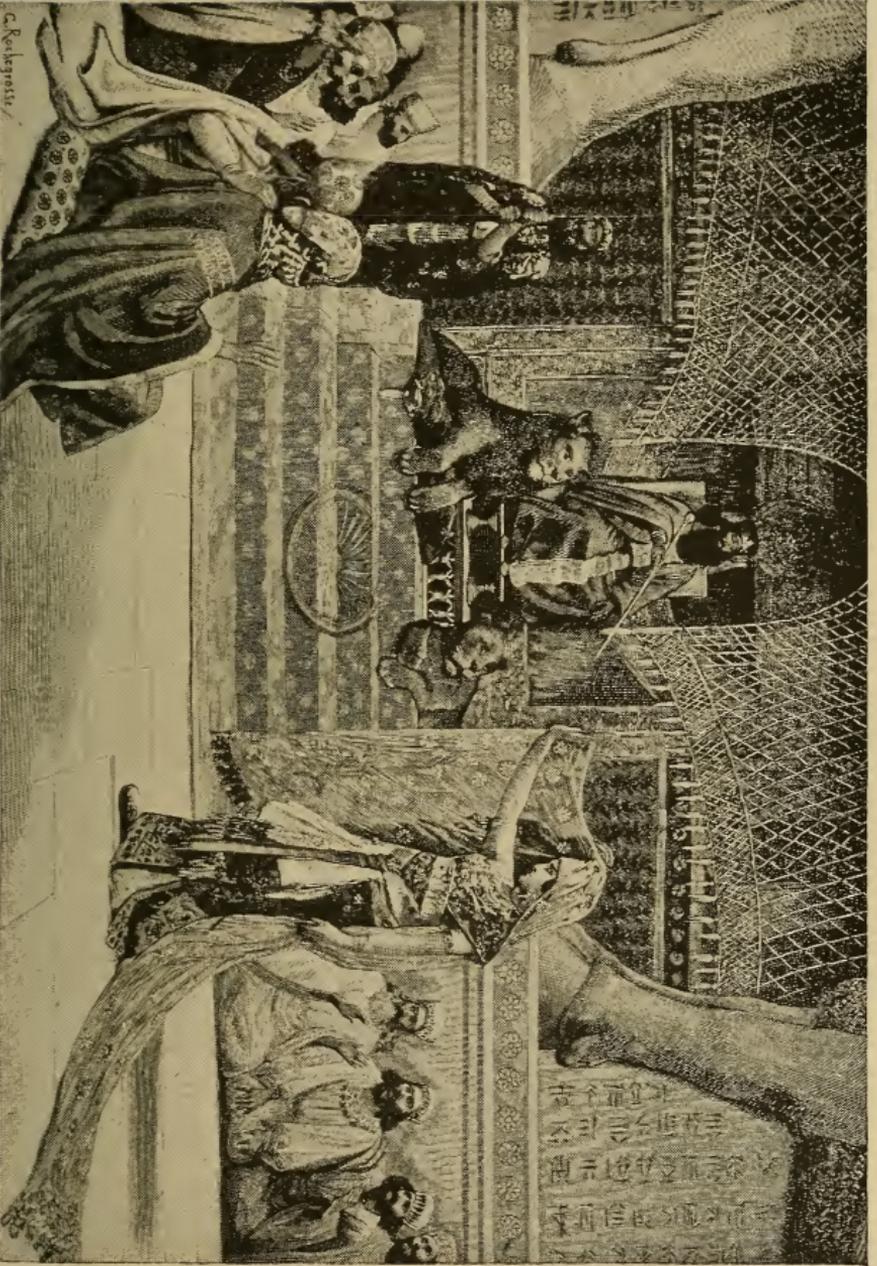
reverence. This affront was more than he could bear. He called his friends about him for advice, and it was decided to cause a gallows of fifty cubits high to be built, and the next morning to ask the King to hang Mordecai thereon. He accordingly ordered the gallows to be made. Early the next morning he repaired to the palace to secure the King's order for Mordecai's death. The story goes on to narrate that the next morning the King arose sooner than his usual hour, and being unable to compose himself again to rest, he caused the book of the records of the kingdom to be read to him. From these records he learned that the conspiracy of Bigthan and Teresh was discovered by Mordecai the Jew, and he was further informed that no honor had been done Mordecai, notwithstanding his bravery and patriotism. Just then Haman appeared in the court, having gone in haste to secure the King's consent to the death of Mordecai. The King immediately ordered him to be summoned into

his presence. What, said the King, shall be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honor? Haman, believing that he himself was that man, suggested that the royal apparel which the King used to wear should be put upon him, and the King's horse should be given him, and the King's crown be placed upon his head, and that he, thus mounted and arrayed, might pass through the whole city, a messenger preceding him and proclaiming, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honor."

Immediately the King commanded him to take the apparel and the horse, and confer this honor upon Mordecai the Jew, who sat in the King's gate. This humiliation was almost too great for Haman to endure. With unspeakable sorrow he returned to his house lamenting his mortification. While bewailing his humiliating condition in the presence of his friends, one of the Queen's chamberlains came to his house and hastened him to the banquet. No sooner had he taken his place

at the banquet than the King again asked Esther what was her petition. Esther preferred a request for the salvation of herself and her people, and she also informed the King that a design was laid for the destruction of both. In answer to the King's angry request, she told him that Haman, then present, was the author of the wicked plot. Rising with wrath from the banquet the King walked into the adjoining garden; then Haman fell before the Queen supplicating his life. In this posture the King found him, and choosing to put the worst construction on his position, he gave his orders, and the servants immediately covered Haman's face, and hanged him on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. The royal command being thus immediately executed, all Haman's goods were given to the Queen, who appointed Mordecai to be her steward in the management of the riches thus secured.

The same day the King was informed of the relation which Mordecai sustained



ESTHER BEFORE AHASUERUS

to her, and he was taken into the royal household and advanced to high honors in the empire, being made keeper of the King's signet. A second time the King was petitioned to have the destruction decreed against the Jews turned away; but according to the law of the land this could not be done, though the Jews by a new decree were given power to defend themselves, and when the 13th day of Adar drew near, when the decree for their execution was to be enforced, they were prepared to defend themselves in every city where they dwelt throughout all the provinces of the empire. A war was therefore commenced between the Jews and their enemies, and on that day the Jews slew of their enemies seventy-five thousand persons; and in the city of Shushan on that day and the next eight hundred more, and among this number were the ten sons of Haman, who were hanged, probably on the same gallows on which their father Haman died. The Jews made great rejoicing over their deliverance,

and, by order of Esther and Mordecai, the 13th, 14th, and 15th days of Adar were consecrated to be annually observed as a commemoration of this deliverance. The 13th is a fast because of the destruction intended, and the other days are a feast because of the deliverance vouchsafed. The fast is called the Fast of Esther, and the feast Purim.

One lesson which we may learn from this narrative is that God always raises up fitting instrumentalities for the accomplishment of great purposes in His kingdom. Wherever there is a crisis there is a man or woman to meet its responsibilities and to discharge its obligations. This principle is illustrated in every age in the history of the Church. When Israel is to be led out of Egypt, God has a Moses. When Moses lays down the honor of leadership, God has a Joshua, courageous and strong, to lead the people through trial into triumph. When the Philistines were to be destroyed, God sent Samson into the conflict. When kingdoms were to be

united, God raised up David. When he lays down the sceptre, Solomon is ready to carry the work forward to greater heights of national glory. When it seemed as if every knee had bowed to Baal, God gave His people Elijah, fierce and strong, to stand for the right and to rebuke the wrong. When the Gospel was to be carried to the Gentiles, God had the Apostle Paul, trained in the school of Gamaliel and in the deserts of Arabia. When great doctrines were to be formulated, God raised up Augustine, and in later days Luther. Later still a Wesley and a Whitefield come forward to rouse England and America from a dead orthodoxy to a living and working faith. God gave us Florence Nightingale to sing her song in the darkest night of the Crimean War, and to call by her brave example into patriotic service in our day of trial noble American women to follow in her footsteps. God be thanked for the noble women, by whatever name they are called, in whatever century or clime they

have lived, who sought the honor of God and the salvation of their race! In proportion as we are faithful in that which is least, God will enable us to be successful in that which is greatest.

The Nativity

By
Charles J.
Parkhurst
A. A.

THE NATIVITY



THE word "nativity" is a long one, but the picture facing page 125 explains what it means. The little Child, its mother, with a circle of light above her head, the manger spread with loose straw, the rude roof under which they are sheltered, the stars that are seen shining outside under the edge of the roof—all this lets us see that our picture is that of the holy night when our Saviour was born in Bethlehem.

It is almost nineteen hundred years since the events described in our picture occurred, but the further we get away from that time the more interesting it all is to us. Christ being born into the world has made so much difference with the world, that when Christmas—which is only another name for Christ's birthday

—comes around we think more and more about it, and make more of it. Nobody knew away back there in Bethlehem how much it meant for Jesus to be born. Mary, the Child's mother, did not know. Joseph, the Child's father, did not know. The angels understood it better, and we read how a multitude of them sang in the sky, praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." But people generally knew very little about it, and cared very little. In the little town of Bethlehem things went on as usual. The night came on just as at other times around the poor little shed where Jesus was born. The stars shone in that same quiet way which it is always their habit to do. Nobody suspected, nobody knew, that the little Child that came into the world that night was to be the greatest man that ever lived—our Saviour.

The world had expected for a great while that something of the kind was going to happen, but nobody knew exactly

what. The idea had become a pretty general one that some one was going to appear in the world that would be a friend to men and their Redeemer, but nobody knew who or when it was to be, or exactly what he was going to do. We can all tell what has happened when it is past, but not many people can tell what is going to happen; but there are a few that can. We call such people prophets. You find a good deal said about them in the Old Testament. These Old Testament prophets knew beforehand that a Saviour was going to appear. Isaiah was such a prophet, and if you will read the fourteenth verse of the seventh chapter of Isaiah, you will see that he was expecting something that was certainly very much like what happened that night in Bethlehem; and as you read further on in the Old Testament, you will discover that this expectation was continually increasing.

It was something as it would be if you had never seen the sun, and on a clear

morning were to stand out very early and see it come up over the horizon. The first thing you would notice would be a little touch of light away up on the sky in the east, which you would think perhaps was a fire a long way off. Then you would see a little cloud growing red along its edges; pretty soon after you would discover that the tops of the hills were becoming bright all over. You would be sure now that something would pretty soon come into sight, but would not know what it was going to be, and would all the time be getting more and more interested and excited. After a while the sky would be full of light, and some of the highest hills be tipped with sunshine. Then at last, suddenly, right on the edge of the horizon, there flashes a spark of something so bright and so dazzling it almost makes the tears come in your eyes to look at it. The *sun* is rising. Now the brightness in the air, the red in the clouds, the glory on the hills, are all understood.

Much like that was the way the people away back in Jerusalem, Hebron, Nazareth, and all the other towns had been watching for something that they were sure was coming, and that their prophets kept telling them was on the way. And at last the wonderful moment came. God's Son — not s-u-n, but S-o-n — came into the world at Bethlehem, and came as a little child.

The children would never have felt nearly as much interest in Christ's coming into the world if, instead of coming as a babe, He had come as a full-grown man. I venture to think that nine out of ten of the children who look at our picture of the Nativity will let their eyes restlessly slip from one part to another of the picture till they discover the little Child, and that there their eyes will fasten. Children think more of children than they do of people that are grown. If two children with their mothers meet on the street, the children will turn around and look at *each other*. Small eyes like

small things. Little minds can understand little things. It was kind in God, therefore, to let His Son come into the world as a *God-child*. If you had in your yard a tree twenty feet high and a flower two inches high, you would think a great deal more of the flower than you would of the tree. Little things for little eyes, little loves for little hearts.

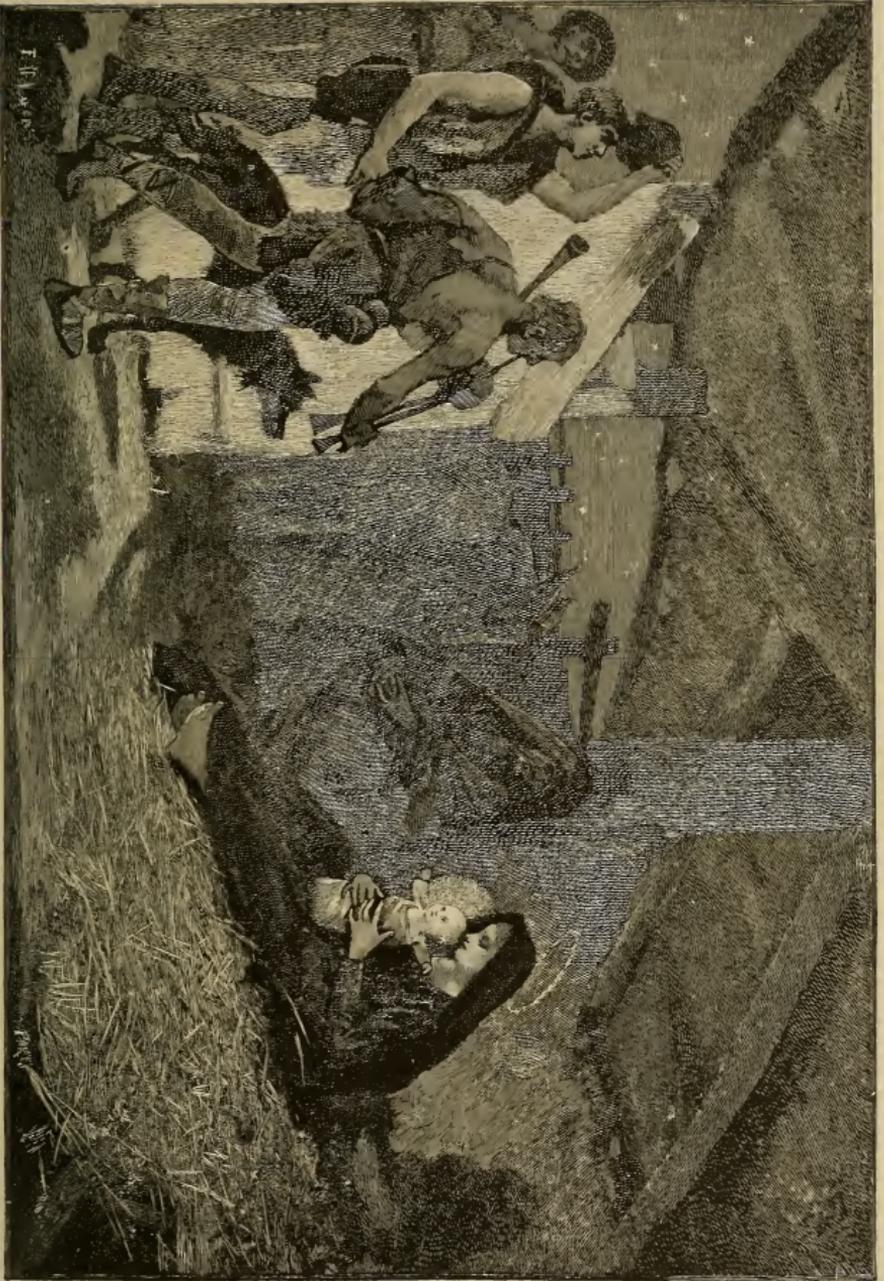
When the children look at the picture of the Nativity, one of the first thoughts that will come to them will be, "What a queer place it was for Jesus to be born in!" No furniture but straw, scarcely any other lodgers but that queer-looking little ass, and no interested people around but those rude minstrels accompanied by a hungry, wolfish dog. Certainly the place was by no means elegant, and not what we should exactly call comfortable. Very likely there are a great many worse places in our own town than this mule shed in Bethlehem, and children have to be born in little dirty rooms in New York because their parents are so poor •

that this is the best thing that can be done for them. But Jesus was the Son of God, and God owns everything, and can do what He likes; and if He loved this little Son of His, why could He not have gotten ready a neater, nicer place for Him to commence life in? This is a rather difficult question, but perhaps there is something about it that by a little thinking we can partly understand, perhaps wholly understand.

We read in the second chapter of Luke that Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem at a time when everybody was on the move, roads thronged, hotels crowded. If ever in our travels we have come to a little country town where there happened to be considerable going on, we can easily appreciate the situation of Mary and Joseph. We have stepped up to the hotel clerk, and said, "Can I have a room?" "Have you telegraphed?" he will answer back. "No." "Well, then, there is no room for you. We are full. Accommodations outside, but none in

the house." Joseph had not telegraphed; no preparation made; no room arranged. The Child Jesus had to fare like other people, and take His own chances.

If a wealthy gentleman were to send a little son of his to a distant town, he would not only arrange to have some one go with him, but would write on in advance to secure suitable quarters, and have them made ready and comfortable against the little fellow's arrival. When God sent His Son Jesus into the world, He gave Him good Joseph and loving Mary to take care of Him, to be sure, and go along with Him, but made no other provision for Him. Jesus had to fare just as any other boy would have had to who had no God for his father. As already said, He had to take His chances, and stand on a level with the rest of the people. No favoritism shown Him. If He had been old enough He might have thought when He was put to bed in the manger: "This is a funny place to put the great God's little Son. Why do they not turn the



IN THE STABLE AT BETHLEHEM

family out of the first story front in the hotel, and put us in there? What's the use in having God for a father if He is not going to send on a courier in advance to let people know who is coming, and make sure that we will be attended to, and have some of the best of everything?" So when they came to the Bethlehem House, or whatever the hotel was called, on account of the crowd, they had, perhaps, to stand up in a line and take their turn as places were assigned, and as all the desirable rooms had been given out before Joseph and Mary's turn came, the only thing left them was to go to the barn, and give their little God-boy a horse-crib for a cradle.

Now certainly one object that God had in sending His Son away from home, putting Him down here on the earth for a few years, letting Him fare exactly as other boys and girls had to fare, giving Him no "push," but making Him take His chances, was to show us that it is the boy and girl that God thinks of, and not

the fineness of the clothes they wear, the amount of money they have to spend, or the sumptuousness of the house in which they live. It is not that God objects to fine houses; we can see from the wonderful beauty of this world which God has made how much He thinks of beautiful things; but by giving His Son Jesus only plain clothes to wear, and only an ordinary house to occupy, and a cheap shed to be born in, He shows us that it is always the boy He thinks of first, and not the sumptuous dwelling that the boy has his home in; the baby that He thinks of first, and not the fancy cradle that the baby is rocked in.

It was only a few days ago that I went through the Babies' Ward of the Postgraduate Medical Hospital, on East Twentieth Street, New York City. The sick children that are gathered there are drawn from some of the poorest and most hopeless homes in town; but all these little ones had been nicely washed, tastily dressed, the wards in which they were

gathered as neatly furnished, and the little cribs in which they were lying as cleanly and tidy in their arrangement as any that could be found in our best homes; and the consequence of it all was that the poor little waifs looked exactly as sweet and lovable as any that you could discover in the most palatial residences along our main avenues. God would teach us, then, by such cases as these, and especially by the case of His own Son, our Lord, born of poor parents in a cheap little house, that the worth of boys or girls is something entirely apart from the kind of clothes they wear, or the style of house in which they live; that the worth of a child is what the child is, not what the child has; that a diamond is still a diamond though its brightness be hidden or soiled, and that the humble roof and the lowly manger may nevertheless shelter the dearest of God's little ones—His own Holy Child, our Saviour.

“Suffer the Little Children to Come
unto Me”

Margaret E
Sanger.

“SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN
TO COME UNTO ME”



IN this beautiful autumn of 1892 American children have observed a great many people going on a pilgrimage. Not that anybody spoke of it as a pilgrimage when father came in, all eager and bright and bustling, to tell mother that she and the children must be ready very soon, spick and span, to go off with him to New York or Chicago, to see the great parades, the banners flying, the drums beating, and all the world celebrating the thing Columbus did in 1492.

But it was a pilgrimage, even if it was not called so, and whole villages and towns went on it, having a very merry, happy time. In other lands and in other periods pilgrimages of one sort or another have been common; and back in the his-

tory of the Hebrew race we find that several times a year they had great feasts which gathered the nation up, and swept it on, in a progressive march to Jerusalem, their capital city. The greatest feast was that of the Passover, which came once a year, when whole families from all over Palestine left their homes and went to worship in the Holy City, where the Temple stood, and the sacrifices were offered, and choirs of white-robed priests chanted the praises of Jehovah.

Now, in modern times, when we go on a journey we step into a railway car at the station, take a comfortable seat, and go rushing like the wind to our journey's end nineteenth-century fashion.

In the old days it was quite different. Then the strong men and boys walked all day long. The women and children rode on donkeys or on camels, or perhaps in a cart drawn by bullocks. At night the companies of neighbors pitched their tents on a hill-side, cooked the evening meal, and then went peacefully to sleep,

with fires blazing here and there on the outside rim of the encampment to frighten away wild beasts. It was an out-door picnic, lasting nearly a month altogether.

At the yearly festival of the Passover it has been estimated by historians that in our Saviour's time the whole land for weeks was a succession of moving caravans, as many as two millions of people, from old men to tiny babies, going up to celebrate the great feast of the nation. Going *up*, for Jerusalem was enthroned among lofty hills, and her Temple could be seen a long way off, shining far over the landscape, and looking in the eyes of the coming host like a great glittering mountain of snow, all pure white and gleaming gold.

As they had no telegraphs or newspapers at the beginning of the Christian era, tidings went from one to another by word of mouth, and people talked together of what was happening in the country. And once it came to pass that there were wonderful things to talk about around the

camp-fire at night and as they journeyed by day.

“ You know Nazareth, off there in Galilee?” one friend would ask of a number, and the rest would answer :

“ Why, yes ! Nazareth is a wild, rough place. Nothing good ever came from Nazareth. A lurking-place for robbers, Nazareth !”

“ Ah !” but somebody else would say, “ a Prophet has arisen in Nazareth ! He goes about the land with a little group of disciples, men who love Him, and He does nothing but good. They say it is perfectly wonderful what He can do ! Why, He went to a wedding once, and the wine gave out, and the people felt dreadfully embarrassed ; but He was there a guest, Jesus his name is, and He told the master of the house to fill some tall jars with water, and he did so, and this strange Prophet turned the water into sweet red wine. Such a thing to do !”

“ Besides this,” a woman’s voice would interrupt, “ He makes blind people see—

“ SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME ”



just opens their eyes, and all the blindness goes. He heals sick people, and feeds hungry people, and He has even called the dead to life. A little maid, Tabitha, whom my cousin Hannah told me about, was dead, and He raised her up, bright and well, just by a touch and a word!"

"Amazing!" A silence would fall on the company, till some one would venture another remark.

"And what do the rulers say, and what does the High Priest think? Can this perhaps be the One we have long looked for, the Messiah?"

But the bold speaker would be speedily frowned down. The people were not yet ready to receive their Messiah, the Deliverer, whom for ages they had been waiting to greet. Few and far between were those who dreamed that this gentle, kind, and loving Jesus might indeed be that Son of Man and the Son of God for whom they waited.

Now and then a thoughtful person, ly-

ing down at night, and remembering all that had been told of Jesus, would whisper, "I wonder, oh, I wonder if He could make bad people good? That would be still harder to do."

Mothers, you know, always desire the best things for their children. So when it chanced one day that in the crowd going towards Jerusalem there was a rumor that Jesus the Prophet was near, talking in His own sweet way, wise and comforting and commanding, a few dark-eyed Judean women, holding babies in their arms, and with older children clinging to their gowns, pressed out of the throng and came close to the Master. This was the name they had begun to call Him now.

They wanted Him to touch their children. Some of the children were ill, some were fretful and tired, some were bubbling over with health and fun. All were very dear to their mothers, and the mothers thought that a touch of those hands that had done so much good would

keep off all evil, and ward off all danger from their darlings in days to come.

Around the Master and between Him and the crowd were gathered His disciples, a group of strong, dark faces, some of them seafaring men, others keen-eyed men from the cities. These were very impatient with the women and children, and rebuked them. We can hear their lifted voices saying:

“Go away! Take those children where they belong! Trouble not the Master. He has other work to do, and cannot be bothered with you and your babies!”

But the mothers were not to be daunted, and held their ground, and very likely some of the little ones cried, or the sturdy little Jewish laddies may even have pressed close enough to the Master to catch hold of His garment.

Presently He turned round, saw the commotion, and then, just as might have been expected, He rebuked the disciples. He looked very encouragingly at the women, and held out His arms to take a

dimpled baby from the mother who stood nearest, saying,

“Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

We do not know anything of the lives of these dear little children on whom Jesus laid His hands, and whom He blessed. We think that some of them may have been in the great crowd who thronged His pathway when He took His last journey to Jerusalem that He might “lay down His life for His sheep.”

Then the children cried, “Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!” as over the palm-strewn road the King went into Jerusalem. Over the cross of His agony His enemies wrote, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews,” writing it in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, for the whole world to read.

But before He came to the cross He had that day of triumph which the Church remembers on Palm Sunday, and then the children, in their glad young voices, shouted “Hosanna!”

Nobody could ever make me believe that little children on whom our blessed Lord laid His hands grew up to be bad men and women. I am sure the blessing abided upon them through their lives, and as they have now been many centuries in heaven, I think that there they love Him very dearly, and as they see His face remember that He said to them first, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not."

But those words were spoken to the children of all ages. Though we do not now see Jesus in the flesh, He is not far away from us. He is our Christ, our Anointed King. Formerly, when kings were crowned, part of the ceremonial consisted in the pouring of oil (chrism) on the royal head. Jesus is called Christ because He is a King.

A King who is as strong and loving in heaven as He was on earth, He still loves little children, and wants them for His own. Another very sweet word that He said was this, a word said to grown peo-

ple, by-the-bye, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven."

Not that children are always good. Christ does not love people for goodness, but because He is good, and they need Him. But children have no care about to-morrow, and nothing to worry them. Children depend on their parents for food and for clothing; children know little of the great evils that are in the world. In every city and town, in every school and home, wherever there is a baby in a little crib, wherever there is a child's hospital, yes, wherever there is a child's little grave, Jesus Christ is still saying, as of old,

"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Peter Walking on the Water

By
James M.
✓
Lambert.

PETER WALKING ON THE WATER



ONCE spent a day in an open boat on the Sea of Galilee. For a while the water lay as smooth and as blue as if it had been a patch of the sky that had fallen. The high hills stretched themselves along the shore like sleeping giants guarding some sacred fountain. But suddenly the wind rose; perhaps I should say that it fell, for it seemed to tumble over the tops of the hills, and roll down the slopes, and dig the water into gullies, and pound it into spray, so that we were glad to get into a little cove and land.

Our boatmen shrugged their shoulders and said that this was only "a little breeze." As we watched the water, ravelled into shreds, I thought what a turmoil there must have been here when old fishermen like Peter called it, as the

Bible says, "boisterous" and "contrary," because of a "great wind that blew."

The scene in the picture occurred at night. Did you ever watch a night storm at sea? No matter how dark it is the spray seems white, and hisses along the waves as superstitious people fancy ghosts glide about in their shrouds. But the disciples in the boat, as they peered through the gloom and tried to keep the bow "head on" to the waves, saw something which they knew was not a mere spray sprite, for it kept its shape, and came steadily towards them. They were afraid, and cried out, "It is a spirit!"

Then another wonder occurred. They say that a sweet musical note can be heard above a noise that is a great deal louder. The sound of the fife penetrates the roar of the guns and the shouts of the soldiers in the battle.

So the disciples heard a sweet voice that floated along the waves and above all the roar of the storm. It said: "It is I. Be not afraid!" They knew that it

was the voice of their friend Jesus, and they knew, too, that Jesus was God, for their Bible taught them that God "alone spreadeth out the heavens and treadeth upon the waves of the sea."

No doubt they all felt like not speaking a word, for the Bible also says, "Be still, and know that I am God." All must have been overcome by their awe of so great a miracle; all but one. He was Peter, who intruded upon the silence with the cry, "If it be Thou, bid me come to Thee on the water."

This makes us think of two things we know about Peter. He was a very *impulsive man*. That is, he often acted without thinking much. Once he was fishing in his boat, and saw Jesus walking on the shore. He could not be patient and let the boat come to shore, but jumped into the sea and embraced the Master with his dripping garment. On another occasion he drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant of the High Priest, without stopping to think that the

little band of disciples could be no match for the crowd of enemies by which they were surrounded, and that the Master did not want any such defence of himself.

Now we all like to see people act quickly from noble and brave impulses, provided that, at the same time, they show good judgment. But quick impulses without judgment often get us into trouble. I have in mind a boy who will make a grand man; but he will have to get some hard knocks to teach him more discretion. In the class-room, if a question is asked of another scholar, this fellow cannot help snapping his fingers and calling out the answer. In playing foot-ball, he cannot keep his own place, and guard against his proper antagonist, but rushes pell-mell after the ball, and often spoils some fine play that his side is making by getting in the way of better runners than himself. The teacher calls him the "Irrepressible." The boys call him "Fresh." I should call him "Little Peter."



PETER WALKING ON THE SEA

During the war a company was ordered one night to move in perfect silence so as to secure a position of advantage without alarming the enemy. A soldier in advance, seeing some gray coats in the distance, but within range of his rifle, could not resist the impulse to fire. The noise, of course, put the enemy on guard and spoiled the plans of the general. He was a brave "Peter."

A good engineer keeps his hand just as ready to use the air-brake as to pull the throttle and let on steam. A strong sense of propriety is the air-brake for an impulsive disposition. Unless you learn to use it you will be apt to jump the track.

But Peter was a *presumptuous man* as well as an impulsive one. He was officious, pushing, self-asserting, presuming that he was wiser, stronger, and of more consequence than he really was. While the other disciples looked with awe at the Lord's miracle, so fitting the character of Him who came to represent the Godhead

to men, Peter presumed upon the propriety of his taking part in the stupendous deed. He, too, a man, would walk on the sea! He would add his little annex to the House Wonderful.

Our Lord did not suggest this; He only permitted Peter to try the experiment that He might teach him his folly.

And how miserably Peter failed! He not only could not walk on the water, but lost even his ordinary fisherman's courage. I doubt if there was another man in the boat who would have been frightened if he had fallen overboard. But Peter, a strong swimmer, lost his presence of mind, became frightened, and cried out, "Lord, save me!" I wonder if some of the disciples did not whisper, "Served him right!" when they took him from Jesus's hand and lifted him back into the boat?

Somebody who reads this will say, "If Peter had only had faith enough he might have walked on the water," for Jesus rebuked him, saying, "O thou of little

faith!" True. But Jesus did not help him have any such faith. On another occasion he said to Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." This time He let it fail.

A man said that he was going to live alone by faith and prayer, so would not work. His clothes became seedy, his home was mortgaged, he began to sink financially and socially, and but for the "helping hand" of a friend, would have "gone under." You see, this man was presumptuous in thinking that God would feed him, when God has said of everybody else, "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." Ravens fed Elijah when there was no other way of his getting food. And if you are doing God's service, and come to want, He will help you through. But the only ravens that come to a man who will not try to earn a living are such ravens as come to men dying in the desert, to pick their bones.

A young man of my acquaintance was very fond of the company of a set of wild

and dissipated fellows. I advised him not to go with them, for the rule is, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." But he said, "Oh, *I* am able to take care of myself wherever I am." He was presumptuous. He sank in the waters of dissipation before he was twenty-five years old.

It is a grand thing to trust in God when you are sure you are doing a thing that is necessary, or that is on the line of his commandments. But it is a foolish thing to trust that He will help you carry out your mere whims or conceits.

Peter afterwards did things as wonderful as walking on the sea would have been; but they were things that were helpful to others, as when he healed the sick; or they were miraculous deliverances when he had got into trouble while doing his duty, as when the prison opened. Be afraid of nothing if you are sure you are humble and right.

One of the grandest characters in old English history was Saint Cuthbert. Once

when he was on his mission of mercy to the poor people, a storm drove his little boat on the coast. His comrades were disheartened, and cried: "The snow closes the road along the shore, and the storm bars our way over the sea. What shall we do?" The brave man replied, "There is still the way of heaven that lies open." On they pushed, and somehow made their journey in safety. But if Cuthbert had tried to show how Heaven would help him to work a miracle by walking on the raging billows of the North Sea, the world would never have heard any more of him. Says the Psalmist, "Trust in the Lord, and do good." But there is no use trusting in Him if you are doing anything else.

Mary in the Garden

By
Wm. W.
H. Vincent.

MARY IN THE GARDEN



LONG ago, very long ago, as the old story runs, a woman went out of a garden with a broken heart. Because of sin she lost her Eden. She looked with pleasure and longing upon what the King had forbidden. Awaking from a dream, she saw herself as she had never seen herself before. The sating of her desire had opened her eyes. She did not even then fully know all the ills that her vain coveting had brought upon her and upon those who were to come after her. Or if she knew, it was quite too late to mend matters. With bitter tears she bowed before the gate her sin had closed. She had forever forfeited the peace and bliss of Eden.

“Must I thus leave thee, Paradise?”

An evil spirit had allured, deceived, and

possessed her. On herself, her husband, and the generations to follow, a shadow had fallen. It was the shadow of a great cloud, with its blackness of darkness. And the darkness was weighted with wrath. The gate was closed and bolted. And the closed gate was guarded by cherubim with flaming swords.

The passing years have numbered centuries, and again we see a woman bowing low before the gate of a grave in a garden. The gate is open. The guard has fled. This time the cherubim, with flashing eyes and glorious raiment, are within. The woman may enter if she will, but the One she seeks is not beyond the portal with the waiting angels. In truth, He is nearer than she knows; and while she weeps, He waits. The surprise and joy which attend faithful love make an old story in this world, and a charming story it is.

When man knows in part, he is eager to know in full. He is sure to make effort

to know. His mind works from the known towards the unknown by varied processes. He reasons. He traces analogies. He imagines. He adds surmises to his certainties. And after a while one is puzzled to know how much of his story is dream-stuff, and how much the substance out of which true history is made.

But thus it has always been. Homer's poems are to such a degree the product of his own fertile and splendid fancy, and of the myths which he found afloat in the air of the old world he lived in, that people forgot how much reality had place in the works of his genius. When Schliemann began to unearth the facts of marble, bronze, and gold long buried in Greece and Asia Minor, everybody was surprised to find so much in the Iliad and the Odyssey that may be called history.

Sir Walter Scott has put his own dream power into the ancient times of which he wrote. One who reads him needs a well-schooled critic and interpreter at hand to distinguish between the historical facts

and the creations of fancy which the "Wizard of the North" has so bewitchingly blended.

Who Mary Magdalene was we do not certainly know. There were several Marys who belonged to the New Testament times. There was the Mary of Bethlehem, mother of Jesus; and Mary of Bethany, whose brother Lazarus we know; and Mary, the mother of James the Less and Joses; and Mary Magdalene, whose name has gone into history and painting and poetry. And her "name is written in heaven." We do not know whether the word "Magdalene" is from the name of the place of her birth and residence, or a title descriptive of her appearance or personal character. When I looked from a sail-boat on the Sea of Galilee to the ruined little village El-Mejdel on its western shore, it was pleasant to connect with it the name of this Mary of the Gospels, Mary of Mejdell, who loved her Lord for a good reason, and loved Him with all her heart.

We usually assume that Mary Magdalene was a great sinner. She was a descendant of the woman who was turned out of the garden in the beginning. And she, the first woman, the mother of all women, was a sinner. But we do not know as to Mary Magdalene what kind of a sinner or how great a sinner she was. Probably she sinned in more than one way, and certainly she needed the saving grace of the Lord Jesus. It is by some supposed that she was the woman in Simon's house of whom Luke tells us, and to whom the poet refers :

“She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
Still wiped the feet she was so blessed to touch.”

And whether she was this same woman or not, it is certain that Jesus had helped and comforted her, and had

“wiped off the soiling of despair
From her sweet soul because she loved so much.”

We learn that seven devils were cast out of her. If one devil possessed her, cer-

tainly she needed the help of Heaven. If seven demons made her body and soul a place of sojourn and action, verily her case was desperate. And if her own moral weakness or base desires made her a congenial place and companion for such guests, the theory which puts her among great sinners is not out of the way. It is a bad thing to let down the bars of self-control, and to let into one's soul the vagrant brutes—wolves and foxes and swine and other demons. But out of Mary Magdalene the Master, Son of another Mary, cast seven devils. Do you wonder at her love for Him? The poet Bryant makes the Lord say to her:

“The greatest of thy follies is forgiven.”

No wonder that she stood watching when He hung on the cross; now “beholding afar off;” now “by the cross.” No wonder that she followed the body to the grave, and “beheld the tomb and how He was laid.” She did not expect Him to appear again. It was the last farewell. She



MARY IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

came early on Sunday morning to the tomb—"very early in the morning" "as it began to dawn"—starting on her melancholy mission "when it was yet dark." She came to weep there. She came to assist in anointing and embalming His body, if ever that stone could be rolled away.

Just where this grave and garden were no one knows. Here the archæologists confuse us. And they are themselves confused. There are swarms of fancies, but no one knows. And it is well. Christianity pure and simple does not care for "things" and "places" and "times" and "seasons." As Dr. Rudolph Stier says: "Any superstitious value for these is a mere infirmity of faith." All we care to know is that as we stand on Olivet and look northward and westward, somewhere within our field of vision "the Lord lay." And from this Olivet, a little to the east of us, He ascended to the heavens. "He is not here, He is risen." He is "at the right hand of God in the glory of the

Father." "And wheresoever two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." We know where He is, why should we care to know where His grave was.

Mary Magdalene was earliest of all on Sunday morning at the tomb of her Lord. And she was first of all to see Him. We have in the Gospels the full story: The empty grave; the haste to make report to Peter and John; their haste to see for themselves; the sight of grave-clothes and folded napkin; the departure of the two, and the second arrival of Mary Magdalene. She stood without at the sepulchre weeping. No, Mary, you cannot see the dear dead face, nor can you wrap anew with spices and sprinkle with perfumes the precious body of your beloved Friend. Then comes the rush of memories. Then the settling down upon her spirit of that rayless night of despair. What if the seven demons come again? And what of that vague hope of a new kingdom that once or twice touched her

soul? But all is over. Weep on, poor woman! Nay, give one more look through blinding tears "at the place where the Lord lay."

"And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.

"And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?

"She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary.

"She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

“Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God.”—St. John, xx. 11-17.

Above the earthly is the heavenly. The love of the best friends who abide in the body is only a shadow of the blessed love of the saints and of the Saviour in the heavens. Thus the Lord turned the thoughts of Mary and of His disciples to God the Father, His God and Father, and ours as well.

To Mary, what a surprise, a mystery, and a speechless joy was in all this! From the bondage of evil spirits to the freedom of angels and of saints; from the dead friend to the living Lord; from tears of bereavement at the gate of the grave to tears of blessedness and joy at the sight of her risen Lord; from sin to holiness; from death to life!

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